

BIG GAME SHOOTING
IN
INDIA, BURMA, &
SOMĀLILAND.

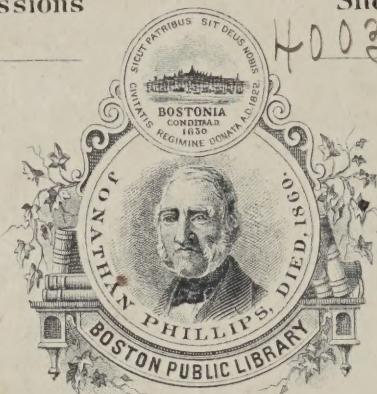


By Col. V. M. Stockley.

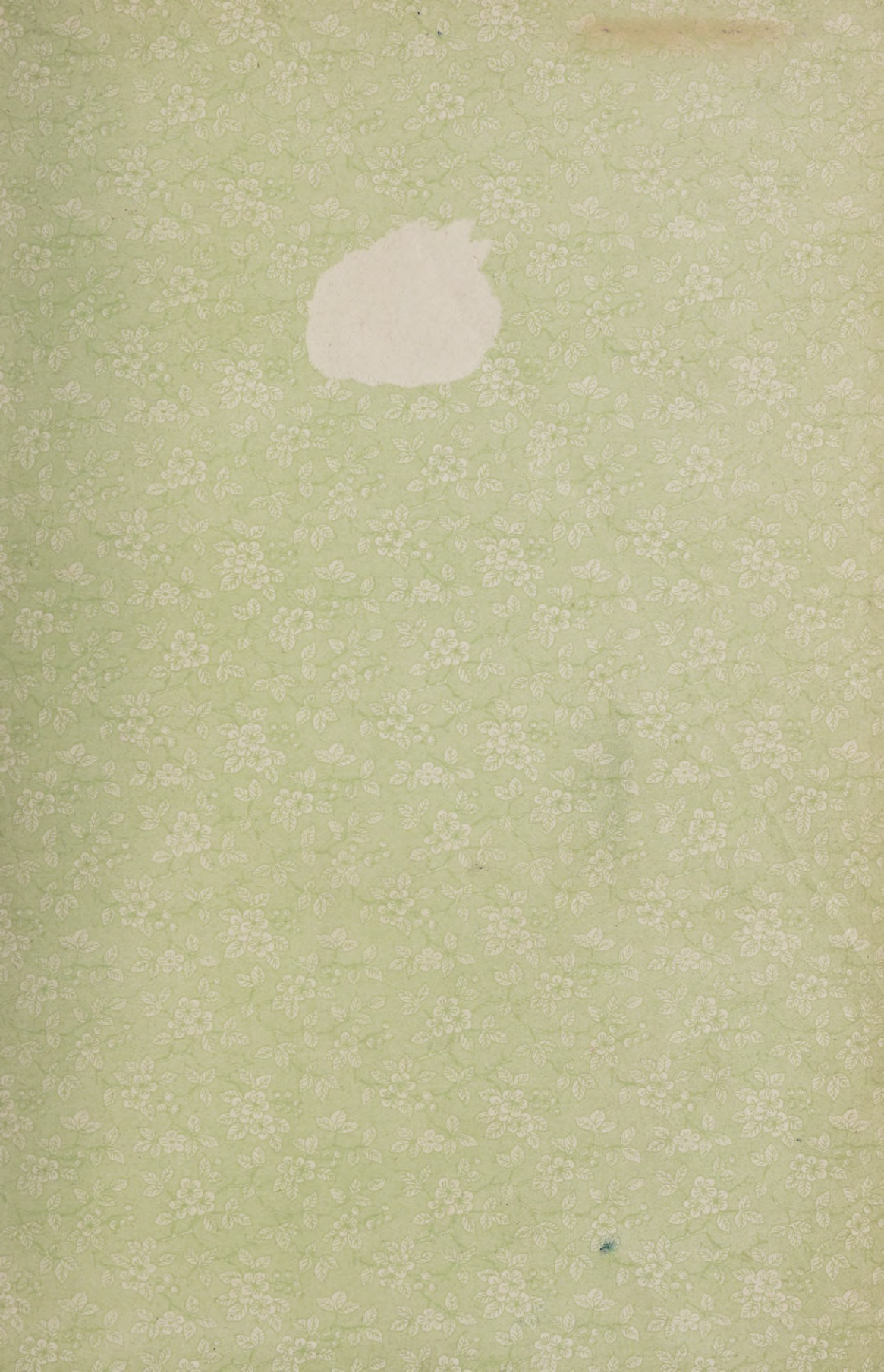
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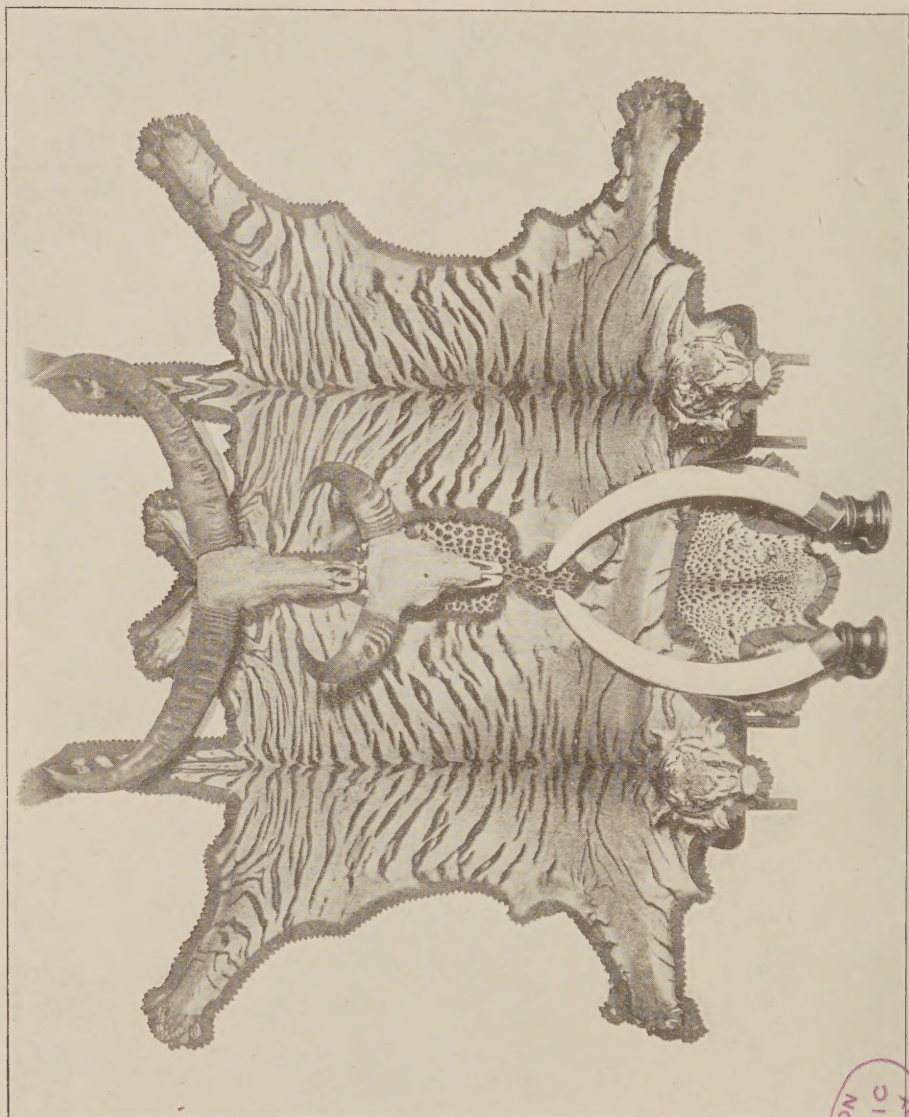


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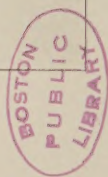




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BIG GAME SHOOTING

IN

India, Burma, and Somāliland.

By

Colonel V. M. Stockley,

Late 16th Cavalry, Indian Army.

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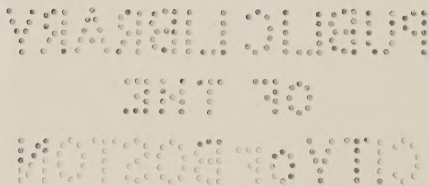
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TO
MY WIFE,
THE COMPANION OF MANY SHOOTING TRIPS.

PREFACE.

IT may be thought there are too many shooting books already. But that is probably not the case, and perhaps never will be so. Personally, I always like to hear or read of the big game experiences of others, and to possibly cull some information or useful hints on the subject. I believe that in these respects the devotees of the pursuit are well-nigh insatiable, and that matters connected with it are of continual interest to them. The fascination of plunging into the wilds and hunting the great beasts found therein, will for ever hold those who have felt it. The charm is too powerful to be thrown off. So I launch this my contribution to big game literature in the hope that those having the like barbaric tastes as myself may derive some pleasure and profit from its perusal.

I have been advised to limit the subject to one country. However, I have not followed this advice, because I do not aim at giving a full description of the game and shooting in any one country, but only of presenting a series of sketches of animals and experiences that have fallen in my way wherever I might be.

On some points of interest on which my own observations are inadequate or wanting, I have ventured to quote from the works of well-known authorities and sportsmen.

If it be thought by any of the readers I may be fortunate enough to gain that I am sometimes too "instructive," and that I give much superfluous advice, I can only say my idea has been to write for those who perhaps know very little of big game shooting, or have no

personal knowledge of the animals described, as well as for those who are experienced hunters, and who may be interested in comparing my views with their own. I have myself generally found too little "instruction" in shooting books, and have read through accounts of the pursuit of a particular kind of game regarding which I wanted information, without being much the wiser in many essential points when I had finished. At all events, I do not think I have anywhere equalled in the way of fatherly advice that which was once given to myself. The occasion was a tiger beat arranged by my host, the Deputy Commissioner of an Indian district. He accompanied me to the "machān" which had fallen to my lot, and was very kind, fixing up a seat on it for me. My two rifles were placed by me, and on leaving my friend said: "load both your rifles." (!!)

The writer of a shooting book, in narrating his own experiences, must always feel he is very egotistical. However, he cannot avoid it. It is a case of "needs must."

The description of the countries in the first chapter is only of a very general nature and from the shooting point of view, to give those who have not been in them some idea of their features and climate, the distribution of the game, and hints regarding shooting expeditions. Details concerning batteries and outfit are not entered into, most sportsmen having their own decided opinions on these subjects, and advice being available in so many works of sport and travel.

The actual shooting experiences related are selected principally on account of the teaching that can be discovered in them, whether they resulted in success or otherwise, and the facts are in exact accord with my shooting diaries, which were written on the evening of the day of the occurrences described, or, if not then, at the first opportunity after returning to camp. When I have added anything from memory to more fully explain matters that do not seem clear in my diary, or have recalled events regarding which I kept no diary, I have always stated that it is from memory.

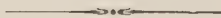
The chapters on Tiger are intended to be useful to those who, not having had experience of this game, and not possessing any special influence, wish to shoot some tigers by their own exertions at a moderate cost.

This is purely a shooting book, and lays no claim to any scientific or other value beyond that expressed by its title. Nor is it aided by pictures illustrating shooting incidents, which I am not a good enough artist to give, and which in any case—as the hunter is at the time completely engaged with the game in front of him—must be more or less flights of fancy. I have never taken photographs, and am therefore debarred from saying, as is now becoming the fashion, that I really prefer photographing an animal to shooting it. So, having no excuse wherewith to cover the indulgence of primitive instincts, I must take my stand unabashed as a simple shooting man.

My last chapter is on “pigsticking,” which is not a subject in strict accordance with the title of this book; but as it can fairly be called “big game,” I have added my reminiscences of a sport which many consider the finest in India.

V. M. STOCKLEY.

1913.



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BIG GAME SHOOTING

IN

INDIA, BURMA, AND SOMĀLILAND.



CHAPTER I.

GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF COUNTRIES.

TAKE a map of India and look over it from the "big game" point of view. It will be seen that there is a network of railways over the whole country, but that the network is not so close in some of the central and southern parts of the peninsula as elsewhere. These comparatively large areas free from railways are the best big game districts, as are also the jungles along the foot of the Himalayas (known as the Terai) and in Assam. In them, generally speaking, are to be found tiger (*Felis tigris*), leopard or panther (*Felis pardus*), hunting leopard (*Felis jubata*), bear (*Ursus labiatus*), elephant (*Elephas Indicus*), bison (*Bos gaurus*), buffalo (*Bos bubalus*), wild pig (*Sus Indicus*), Indian wolf (*Canis pallipes*), Indian antelope (*Antelope bezoartica*), Indian gazelle (*Gazella Bennetti*), nylghao (*Portax pictus*), sāmbar (*Rusa Aristotelis*), swamp deer (*Ruceros Duvaucelli*), spotted deer (*Axis maculatus*), hog deer (*Axis porcinus*), and barking deer (*Cervulus muntjac*). Confined to the Nepalese Terai and Assam are the great Indian rhinoceros (*Rhinoceros Indicus*), and the clouded leopard (*Felis Diardii*). In Assam and also in the Sunderbands (Ganges delta) is found the lesser Indian rhinoceros (*R. Sondaicus*). Both the Indian rhinoceroses are one-horned.

The remoter parts of the Central Provinces, with which I am more particularly acquainted, are forest-covered, with many rivers. One of the finest is the Indrawatti. It flows through a wild country affording the most picturesque scenery of forest and hill, peopled by aboriginal

tribes, and containing all the large game generally mentioned with the exception of elephant. The part of this river I know best divides the district of Chānda from the Native State of Bastar. Some of the hills of this part of India are over 4000 feet in height. The smaller rivers are full only during and a little after the rainy season—July to October. At other times the river beds are stretches of sand with occasional pools, broken with black basalt rocks and islands of green cover—the evergreen bushes of jāman (*Eugenia Jambulana*), and karunda (*Carissa carandas*). It is these sandy river-beds that show the tracks of all animals in the neighbourhood which come to drink and wander over them at night.

The northern part of India, from Calcutta to Peshāwur (*leaving out the Terai*), consists chiefly of great plains, for the most part under cultivation, but interspersed with tracts of low jungle and waste land. Along some of the rivers—especially the Jumna—are intricate masses of ravines: along others—as the Ganges and the Sutlej—long stretches of high grass and tamarisk bush (*Tamarix gallica*), commonly called “jow.” In the extreme north-west, between Peshāwur and Jhelum, lies a very broken country traversed by the Salt Range. In this is found the oorial—a wild sheep (*Ovis cycloceros*). Over most of the rest of the country mentioned there are leopard, wild pig, and the three species of Indian antelope, commonly known as nylghi (*Portax pictus*), blackbuck (*Antelope bezoartica*), and chinkāra (*Gazella Bennetti*).

The mighty Himalayan Ranges, forming the northern boundary of India, contain the most magnificent scenery in the world. From the rushing streams and torrents rise up the steep, pine-clad mountain sides, until, far above, the limit of the forest line is reached, and, in summer, grassy, flowery slopes, destitute of trees, gradually merge into the rocks and snows of the high ridges, these again surmounted by the snowy peaks that shoot up above the clouds into what seems another world, or on a clear day glitter in the sun, and make a dazzling array against the blue sky.

In the winter and early spring the mountains are under snow nearly down to the lower valleys. The line of perpetual snow is at about 15,000 feet. The passes, varying from 11,000 to 17,000 feet, are not usually open for travellers until the beginning of May. The general forest line is at about 10,500 feet, up to which height pine forest may extend. Above this, birch trees and rhododendron bushes may grow for another 1000 feet, but they will be in scattered, thin clumps at this height.

The Himalayan big game consists of brown bear (*Ursus Isabellinus*), back bear (*Ursus torquatus*), leopard, ibex (*Capra Sibirica*), markhor (*Capra megaceros*), tähr (*Hemitragus Femlaicus*), serow (*Nemorhædus bubalinus*), gooral (*Cemas goral*), musk deer (*Moschus moschiferus*), and Kashmir deer (*Cervus Cashmirianus*).

To the north of the Himalayas lies Tibet, and to the north-west the Tibetan provinces—Rupshu, Zanskar, and Lādāk—that form part of Kashmir territory. In crossing some of the passes on the main range of the Himalayas, the nature of the country is found to change entirely. Standing on one of these passes, one may see forest-covered slopes to the south, and the bare, treeless mountains of the Tibetan provinces to the north. The people on the northern side also change, becoming Mongolian in feature and wearing pigtails.

The part of Tibet I am acquainted with is Lādāk, and the Lādāk-Tibetan frontier north of the Pangong Lake. This remarkable lake is about a hundred miles long, with a general east and west course, but nowhere more than four miles wide. Its altitude has been fixed at 13,936 feet. The water appears a deep blue and is too salt to drink. Beyond the Pangong Lake the country is uninhabited. Northward lies Khotan, and to the north-east and east, the unknown land of Tibet. The line of perpetual snow is at about 22,000 feet. The whole of this region north of the lake is extremely elevated, the valleys themselves being at from 15,000 to 17,000 feet, and most of the passes over 18,000—some over 19,000. Many of the valleys are a mile or more broad and fairly level. The hills are often gently sloping, with rounded tops, forming a mountainous country of a very different character to the steep, precipitous hills and narrow valleys of the Himalayas. Stretches of bright green grass grow along some of the streams, and this presents the only contrast to the general barren aspect of the scenery. The mountains seem devoid of any vegetation, but scanty tufts of grass are occasionally perceptible when one is actually on the hill side. A low scrub called "boortsa" grows in places, the roots of which are useful as fuel.

The scenery of these desolate wilds is weird and fantastic, being sometimes a jumble of hills and peaks of various hues—grey, black, blue, red, yellow—bounding the broad valleys, and stretching away till merged in distant snow-clad ranges that look nearer than they are through the abnormally clear atmosphere.

Strong, cold winds prevail, with frost and frequent falls of sleet or snow, even in the summer.

The wild yāk (*Bos grunniens*), the Tibetan antelope (*Pantholops Hodgsoni*), and the wild sheep—nyān (*Ovis Hodgsoni*), and baral (*Ovis nahura*), are to be found in those remote parts beyond the Pangong Lake. South and west of the lake, the ibex and the wild sheep—nyān, baral, and shāpoo (*Ovis Vignei*). “Nyān” is the native name for the great wild sheep of Lādāk and Tibet, commonly known to sportsmen as the “Ovis Ammon.” This designation, however, is incorrect, being the scientific name of the Siberian species, with which the Tibetan was supposed at one time to be identical.

The Tibetan gazelle (*Gazella picticandata*) is to be met with along the Lādāk-Tibetan frontier south of the Indus. The Tibetan wild ass (*Equus hemionus*), commonly known by its native name of “Kiāng,” roams generally over the whole frontier region, extending with the yāk and antelope far into the interior of Tibet, as described in the works of the explorers—Bower, Deasy, Wellby, and Rawling.

Another animal inhabiting parts of Lādāk and the high Himalayan Ranges, but not, I believe, Tibet proper, is the snow leopard (*Felis uncia*). Natives of Tānkse and the neighbourhood of the Pangong Lake have declared to me that no kind of leopard exists about the lake or along the Tibetan frontier there. The explorers named make no mention of any leopard in Tibet. Yet another animal that may be here referred to is the Tibetan wolf (*Canis lupus*). Some are black, and others grey. I have several times come across them north of the Pangong Lake. On one occasion I saw two together—a black and a grey. The Lādākis with me said they were not different species, for they had known black and grey cubs in the same same litter. Also what they described as red cubs. This is Stemdale’s opinion, and is borne out by Rawling, who, in his book “The Great Plateau,” considers they are varieties of the same breed, and states that a yellow and black may often be seen together. He twice saw a black she-wolf with two cubs—a black and a yellow.

The climate of these countries may be conveniently described from the coming of the south-west monsoon in June, which brings up a heavy rainfall over nearly the whole of India, and is checked in its northward course by the ranges of the Himalayas. This makes the region beyond—Lādāk and Tibet—comparatively dry and rainless, and, together with the great elevation, causes its desert appearance and clear, rarified air.

The rainy season usually lasts till the middle of September, and is

followed by bright, clear weather. October is a lovely month in "the hills" (as the Himalayan Mountains are termed in India), but towards the end of that month or beginning of November, snow commences to fall there.

In the plains and jungles, the latter part of the rains and the clear weather following till Christmas constitute the fever time. The jungles are particularly feverish at this period. About Christmas there is generally some more rain, and then fine, cold weather till March ushers in the hot and non-feverish season. During April and May, there are occasional showers, but the heat is excessive till the breaking of the monsoon in June.

The coldest part of India (excepting the Himalayas) is the Punjāb in the north-west. No snow falls on the plains. The days are clear and bracing, but the nights are bitterly cold during December, January, and February, with frequent frost.

The Central Provinces also enjoy a bright, bracing cold weather, during January and February. Further south, however, there cannot be said to be any real cold, except in the higher hilly parts, such as the Nilghiris, which run from 5000 to 7000 feet in height.

The Himalayas down to about 6000 feet are covered with snow from December till April. The passes are usually not considered open before the 1st of May, though many keen sportsmen, bent on reaching their shooting grounds quickly, cross them during April. Some of the lower and less difficult passes may be crossed at any time of the year on favourable days.

To the north of the Himalayas the climate is severe even in summer. In winter its severity is extreme. Parts of Lādāk, however, such as the valley of the Indus, are hot during July and August.

The transport in customary use indicates the nature of the routes. In the plains and most parts of India, off the railways and main roads, bullock carts travel easily over the country roads and tracks. In some of the hilly parts of central and southern India, pack animals (elephants, camels, ponies, mules, bullocks) should be used, the paths being sometimes too steep or rough for carts. If camels are taken it will be found they are not good for the more rugged of the hill tracts, nor for any routes in the rainy season, wet and muddy ground being very difficult for them; and then human transport must be resorted to. Carriers may be engaged from the villages, but not generally for more than a few days at a time. This will enable an

expedition being made to ground otherwise not accessible, or a particular bit of difficult country being crossed.

In the Himalayas many of the routes are only practicable for carriers ("coolies" as they are commonly termed), and it is customary for the headmen of villages to supply the European traveller with the number of men he requires. It will be found inconvenient as a rule to shoot in "the hills" with more baggage than can be carried by about twenty men, as a greater number will often be unobtainable in out-of-the-way parts of the mountains.

Certain Himalayan routes, however, such as the Srinagar-Leh trade route, and that between Simla and Leh by the Rotang and Bārālācha passes, are practicable throughout for pack animals in the summer months, mules or ponies being generally employed.

In Lādāk and Tibet ponies and yāks (and more rarely mules) are the usual means of transport, the country being of an easier character than the Himalayas, and the paths all traversable by pack animals.

In penetrating the uninhabited region north of the Pangong Lake, or crossing the Tibetan frontier beyond, ponies and mules are better than yāks. For though they require some grain occasionally (while the yāk lives solely on what grass it can find), they are capable of more continuous and longer marches than the latter animal, which is liable to footsoreness. The yāk again is dependent on the presence of grass, whereas the mule and pony, if grain be carried, can cross tracts devoid of it.

Regarding supplies, there is no great difficulty, even in remote parts, in feeding your followers. Both in the hills and plains* everything needed, such as rice or atta (flour), ghee (clarified butter), fowls, eggs, vegetables, and milk, can be obtained from the larger villages. Such villages will seldom be more than twenty miles away. Moreover, even the smaller villages can usually supply a certain amount of foodstuff. It is a good plan, however, to have a reserve of rice, atta, etc., sufficient for your followers for about a week. This should not be drawn on except in case of the temporary failure of the ordinary supply arrangements.

In the Central Provinces rice is the staple article of diet. In the Punjāb and North-West Provinces, atta, which is the kind of flour generally favoured by the natives. If atta is required by any of your

* The term "the hills" in common parlance applies to the Himalayas, and the term "the plains" to all the rest of India.

followers in the Central Provinces, and other non-wheat growing districts, a sufficient quantity should be taken from the starting point, or arrangements made for having it forwarded afterwards, as it would be difficult to get locally in the country parts.

In the Tibetan districts north of the Himalayas, the conditions are not so easy. In Lādāk, if off the Srinagar-Leh trade route, there are tracts of country where villages are not met with in a week's marching, and suitable arrangements must be made from the last village where supplies are procurable. If going into the uninhabited region north of the Pangong Lake, supplies will of course be taken for the whole party for the length of time it will be away, unless later convoys to a fixed point are arranged for. Tānkse is the last village of importance in this direction, and supply arrangements should be completed there before pushing into the wilds beyond. Rice and atta required should be laid in at Leh, as they are not to be got at Tānkse—only "suttoo" (the staple food of the Lādākis, made from barley) and a kind of butter being procurable at the latter place.

For yourself, you will require—besides the articles of food obtainable locally—some "extras" in tin and glass, that you will lay in while preparing your expedition. In cold or temperate weather there is no difficulty in doing yourself well, but in the hot season in "the plains" it is not quite so easy. In such a climate tinned meats, butter, or milk, after being opened, will not keep a day. Milk and butter obtained from villages are often dangerous, especially butter. If any meat is required beyond fowls and freshly killed game, small "army ration" tins and other meats and vegetables in tins or glass that afford a single hot or cold meal, should be taken. Small cheeses in tins or jars, of a soft kind (such as "MacLaren's Imperial," "Clover Cream," "Brie," and "Camembert") that will spread on biscuit, make up for the want of butter, and keep perfectly good for three or four days. Small tins of sardines that can be finished in one or two meals the same day are useful. They make a good dish mixed up with rice, pepper and salt. Tinned or bottled fruits and all kinds of dried fruits are very acceptable. Jams, chutneys, and curry powder should not be forgotten. If your cook can make a good curry, it is generally the best way in which he can tempt you to eat the village fowl in hot weather. Horlick's malted milk (a powder) does fairly well in tea or coffee, and keeps for any time. It makes a rather good drink with plain water, hot or cold.

The water of the rivers or of pools in otherwise dry beds in the plains is generally quite good to drink without boiling or further preparation, according to my own experience.* The advice is sometimes given that unboiled water should never be drunk in the jungle. If, however, I had made such a rule, I could certainly not have followed bison and buffalo as I did in the hot weather in the Indrawatti country. I then used to have my drinking water carried in a *chāgal* (water skin holding three or four quarts), in which it kept cool by evaporation, and often found that during a hard day in the great heat, I had to refill the *chāgal* more than once from the river or from pools in nullahs, in order to be able to continue hunting. If the water of a pool is doubtful or hot, a hole dug a few feet from it will soon produce cooler and better water, which in percolating through the sand has become naturally filtered. In an apparently dry nullah, if the sand anywhere is found to be in the slightest degree moist, water will be obtained at that part by digging.

When camped near villages, water is frequently supplied by the village well, and is generally quite safe and drinkable. Sparklet syphons give life to water, especially to boiled water, which is apt to be flat and dull. Occasionally, however, the only water near a village, at which you have perhaps arrived after a long march, may be a "jheel" or marshy pond, used by the inhabitants not only for drinking, but also for washing, and for watering their cattle and buffaloes, which further foul the water by standing and lying about in it. To meet such contingencies a few dozen of soda water should be taken.

Now a few words as to the making of shooting expeditions. You will decide on a certain tract of country for your shoot, collect all available information concerning it, and fix on your organising and starting points. You will get the best map† you can of your theatre of operations, and note the nearest post-offices to which (according to your intended movements) you will have your letters, etc., addressed, and the villages from which supplies, extra transport, men, or other assistance, may be looked for.

Regarding what I have termed organising and starting points, these may be one and the same or different places. One place may be the best at which to engage certain of your followers, procure

* In "the hills" the water of the mountain streams is perfection—clear and sparkling.

† I have found the "Indian Atlas" sheet maps—scale four miles to the inch—issued by the Indian Survey Department, the best.

transport, and make other necessary arrangements. It may have a bank convenient for opening an account. Another place may be the most suitable for your actual starting point, whence—having concentrated—you will march with your camp and permanent following complete.

One of the first steps when preparing for an expedition is to carefully make out a list of everything that will be required to the smallest article. Otherwise something will be forgotten, causing an unexpected delay.

You will have to communicate with civil, forest, and postal authorities.

With reference to post offices : in the remoter parts of the Central Provinces you may be separated from the nearest one by fifty miles of forest country, and in the Himalayas by that distance of mountain country, involving the crossing of perhaps a high pass. The post offices themselves may be more than a hundred miles from the nearest telegraph office or railway. Some of the small ones do not transact money order business, and those that do, if far away from a Treasury, take a long time in collecting the money, as the postal runners are prohibited from carrying more than small amounts at a time in such out-of-the-way parts. If you send in for your letters, parcels, etc., or arrange with the postmaster to forward them, two men will generally have to be employed, a single man not caring, as a rule, to face a long journey by himself, chiefly through fear of wild animals.

In going into eastern Lādāk and along the Tibetan frontier, you get out of reach of the post, unless you arrange systematic communication between your camp and the post office at Leh, across a hundred to two hundred miles (as the case may be) of a mountainous country. Leh is more than 400 miles by road from the nearest railway station—Rawal Pindi, but is in telegraphic communication with India through Srinagar.

A word as to followers. Your servants (as a bachelor) in camp in the plains will include a personal head servant (bearer), a table attendant (khidmatghar), cook, water-carrier (bhisti), horse-keepers (syces), and grass-cutters. Some may think the table attendant a superfluous luxury, but it is not a bad thing to have a man who can to some degree take the place of the bearer or cook in case either of them go sick. Otherwise you may be reduced to a single servant for cooking, besides personal service and general superintendence of camp matters, which would not be comfortable.

In the hills you go prepared to rough it more. Many sportsmen take only a single all round personal servant, a "permanent coolie" (which means a generally useful hill man), and a syce good enough to take care of a hardy pony. Some hill shooters, however, dispense even with the latter, taking no pony and footing it always.

In regard to pitching camp, getting wood and water, and other work of the kind, the cart, camel, pony men, or, on certain Himalayan routes, the carriers (commonly termed "coolies") with you will assist your servants in this. Besides your servants and these men, there will be your "shikāris," gun-bearers, and (if calves, goats, etc., are taken for tiger and leopard baits) herdsmen.

Regarding shikāris, I have, as a rule, found it preferable, whether in the hills or plains, not to engage men calling themselves shikaris (as they are often frauds), but to make use of intelligent villagers living in the actual shooting locality. In the Central Provinces particularly, when hunting the heavy game, such as bison and buffalo, all you require are good trackers who know the forests. Many such men are to be found amongst the aboriginal tribes inhabiting those wilds. If specially after tiger, be your own shikāri, that is, adopt your own system of tiger-shooting, making use of the inhabitants, and your herdsmen and gun-bearers as assistants.

To change the scene to the north of the Himalayas: if making an expedition into the uninhabited region beyond the Pangong Lake, the same principle (that is of not dragging about with you men calling themselves shikāris) especially applies. You must make your final arrangements at Tānkse, and no men know that region so well as the Tānkse men. You will probably engage most of your transport there, and amongst the men in charge of it you will be sure to find some intelligent ones to show you game. In any case, even if you use transport engaged elsewhere, you will be obliged to enlist some of the Tānske men as guides for the country beyond, and amongst these will be men who can act as shikāris better than any men brought from a distance.

BURMA.

Now to turn to Burma. If a map of that country be referred to, it will be seen that the main railway and the Irrawaddi River traverse it north and south between Myitkyina and Rangoon. There are also several branch railways. The important tributary, the Chindwin River, after a course from north to south roughly parallel with the railway and the Irrawaddi, joins that river near Myingyan.

There is a good steamer service on the Irrawaddi, and small steamers and country boats ply on the Chindwin.

By rail or boat nearly all the shooting grounds of Burma can be easily approached. The river and railway lines also afford most convenient bases for projecting expeditions into any part of the country, as a glance at the map will show.

More or less throughout the jungles of Burma are found the tiger, leopard, bear (*Ursus torquatus*), elephant, bison, tsine (*Bos Sondaicus*), pig, sāmbar, brow-antlered deer (*Rucervus Eldi*), hog deer, and barking deer.

"Tsine" is the Burmese name for a species of wild cattle, smaller than bison.

Rhinoceros are found only in certain parts of Burma. There are no less than three species, namely, *R. Sondaicus*, *R. Lasiotis*, and *R. Sumatrensis*. The two latter are two-horned. They are all difficult to come across, being very local, and tracts which have been known to hold them one year may have none of them another.

Before proceeding to hunt for them, reliable information of jungles actually known at the time to hold them should be obtained.

Other animals that are found only in certain parts of the country or are rarely met with are:—the wild buffalo (only in Lower Burma), the Burmese serow (*Nemorhædus Sumatrensis*), gooral, clouded leopard (*Felis Diardii*), and Malayan bear (*Ursus Malayanus*).

Burma is one of the most hilly and forest-covered countries in the world. The ranges average about 3000 feet in height. Some in parts go up to 7000 feet. There are few good roads. Therefore, off the lines of river and rail, travelling generally resolves itself into the primitive method of daily marches, with baggage curried by man, beast, or cart. The intricate masses of hills and dense jungles, the vast extent of luxuriant virgin forest, make it a difficult shooting ground; but to the man who faces its difficulties it is par excellence the country for heavy game—for the elephant and the bison. Even in the wildest parts, some small village will probably be within reach, or will certainly have been passed *en route*, whence trackers and men knowing the jungles more or less (sometimes, it must be owned, a good deal "less") can be obtained; and these will be all the assistants you will require when following the "heavy game." You will most likely be able to approach your shooting ground by putting your things into bullock carts, hired day by day, or for several days, as the case may

be. The tracks, though rough, are traversable by carts in many parts of Burma. You may, however, often have to change your transport from carts to carriers, in order to actually reach your ground, especially if after bison. In some places mules can be engaged for the whole time you expect to be away (notably at Bhāmo, Mogok, and Taungyi), which would save the trouble of changing and hiring different kinds of transport, unless a particularly difficult piece of country, only practicable for carriers and unladen animals, had to be penetrated. The mules—unladen—could then accompany you, or be left behind at a temporary base.

The remarks made regarding supplies in India apply generally to Burma, except that milk cannot be obtained, as the Burmese do not milk their cows. Rice is the staple food.

Postal communication is not so good in out of the way parts as it is in India. Away from the lines of river and rail there are hardly any post offices. So you may have to send in for letters, etc., a considerable distance. I have found myself at varying distances between fifty and a hundred miles from the nearest post office.

I think it is better to take Burmese servants into the jungles. Being in their own country and speaking the language, they are more useful than Indian servants.

The climate, with its rainy, cold, and hot season, is much the same as that of India. Upper Burma is comparable to northern and central India, and Lower Burma to southern India. There is no bracing cold at any season in Lower Burma, except in the higher hilly tracts. The climate of Upper Burma, however, during the cold weather is usually superb—bright, clear, and cold, especially in the hilly parts.

The malarial period is the same as in India—August to Christmas. Fever is then very prevalent in the lower jungle tracts, becoming less the greater the elevation. Above 3500 feet (as in India) there is little or none of it. The dews in Burma are heavier than in India.

SOMĀLILAND.

We now come to the consideration of British Somāliland, which takes up about 500 miles of the African coast in the Gulf of Aden, and extends inland for some 200 miles at its widest part. It is a country without roads or railways, being traversed only by a few caravan tracks. The transport animal used is the camel. There are

not a dozen villages or settlements with cultivation round them in the whole Protectorate. Those inland are occupied by the moollahs or priests. The three coast settlements are Berbera (the headquarters of our Resident), Bulhar, and Zeila. The tribes inhabiting the interior are nomadic, moving their "Karias" (camps of portable huts) as necessity for seeking fresh pasturage for their flocks and herds demands. The people live principally on camel flesh, mutton, and milk; and practically no provisions beyond these can be obtained in the interior, except the game that is shot. So all other supplies for followers have to be laid in at Berbera, which is the usual starting point for expeditions. In fact, your caravan must be completely equipped and self-contained, like a ship at sea.

The Maritime Range runs parallel with the coast at from five to twenty miles from it. Between these hills and the sea lies what is called the Maritime Plain, which gradually slopes upwards from the sea to the base of the range, at a height of 300 to 400 feet. The hills rise about a thousand feet higher. The plain is semi-desert with low mimosa bush on it. The hills are barren, with river-beds cutting through them here and there. The river-beds generally appear dry except in the rainy season, though water is often found percolating through the sand under the surface. The banks are sometimes wooded, forming a contrast to the bare looking hills around.

Beyond the Maritime Range, and divided from it by an interior plain, rises the Golis Range to a height of nearly 7000 feet in parts, running roughly east and west for about a hundred miles at thirty to forty miles from the coast. The meridian of Berbera (45° E) passes through the centre of the range.

South of the Golis Mountains there lies a great waterless, rolling plateau, alternate bush and open plain, called the Haud, which, at a general elevation of about 3500 feet, stretches southward some 150 miles to Ogāden (Italian Somāliland). The soil is powdery and of a reddish colour. A feature of the Haud is the number of red ant-hills dotted over parts of it, some nearly twenty feet high.

The game found in the Haud consists of lion (*Felis leo*), leopard, and the following antelope: Oryx (*Oryx beisa*), lesser koodoo (*Strepsiceros imberbis*), Somāli hartebeest (*Bubalis Swaynei*), Clarke's gazelle (*Ammodorcas Clarkei*), Waller's gazelle (*Lithocramus Walleri*), Sæmmering's gazelle (*Gazella Sæmmeringi*), Speke's gazelle (*Gazella Spekei*), and three species of dik-dik antelope—*Madoqua Swaynei*, *Madoqua Phillipsi*, *Madoqua guentheri*. In the southern part of the Haud, and on the Ogāden and Abyssinian borders,

the black rhinoceros (*Rhinoceros bicornis*) is found: in the western part of the Protectorate but north of the Haud, the elephant: in the Golis Range, the koodoo (*Strepsiceros koodoo*), and the klipspringer (*Oreotragus saltator*): along the foot of the Golis and other ranges, the warthog (*Phacochærus æthiopicus*): on the Maritime Plain, the lowland or Pelzeln's gazelle (*Gazella Pelzelni*).

The climate of the Haud is, generally speaking, dry and bracing, and there is no malarial fever. A cool wind usually blows across it. Even in the hottest months—July and August—a tent can be lived in without any discomfort, and meat will keep good four or five days. On the coast and Maritime Plain, however, the heat is very great.

The seasons are as follows:—the dry season, January to April; the rains, May and June; the hot weather, July to September; the cold season with light rains, October to December.

During the rains is the best time for shooting on the Haud, as pools are formed, giving a water supply, and thereby making it possible to wander over it. The fresh grass springing up attracts the game and consequently the lions. Still there will sometimes be two or three marches—thirty to forty miles—between known pools, rendering it necessary to have several camels to be used for carrying water casks only. The water of these pools is often muddy, dark coloured, and even stinking. The Somālis never seem to mind how dirty it is, and drink it as they find it. My cook used to prepare it for me by dropping in a little alum, and boiling it. As it boiled a scum rose to the top, which he removed with a ladle. When it cooled there was a sediment formed at the bottom. The water was strained off through a clean, thin, white cloth, and was then passably fit to drink.

Regarding the organising of an expedition, pretty well everything necessary can be obtain at Aden and Berbera. At the latter place—the actual starting point—most of the men are engaged, and followers' supplies (rice, dates, ghee), camels, and ponies bought. The Somālis take no care (in our sense) of their ponies, never cleaning or clothing them. After, perhaps, a long ride, a pony is stripped, hobbled, and turned off to shift for itself, until it is again required for work, or is brought in to the karia or bivouac at night for protection if necessary. It picks up its own living on grass only, can go two or three days without water, is capable of great endurance, and does not require shoeing. Ponies are bred chiefly for intertribal fighting, and average fourteen hands. The Somāli tribes constantly raid each other for

ponies, camels, cattle, and sheep. Every man carries a shield and two spears, a light one for throwing, and a heavy one for stabbing. In recent years many of them have obtained fire-arms. They, however, used rarely to molest Europeans, and until the late troubles with the "mad moollah" it was safe enough to travel in Somāliland. The Political Officer at Aden, however, when granting permits to shoot, always insisted on an armed escort being taken. When I went (1897) I armed my ten camelmen with Snider rifles and ammunition obtained from the Aden arsenal. They all knew how to shoot, owing to having been similarly employed on previous expeditions. I used to give them occasional musketry practice.

A "headman" is always engaged. He is responsible for the discipline of the Somālī followers, sees that all necessary work is performed by them, and arranges the camp duties. In Somāliland it is the custom to post an armed sentry and keep a fire up throughout the night.

It is best to engage a few native hunters at Berbera or the neighbourhood, as gunbearers. These men are accustomed to accompany sportsmen and travellers coming from England or India, and can generally speak a certain amount of both English and Hindustānī. They are thus useful as interpreters out hunting between you and the "wild" Somālīs of the interior, who speak only their own patois. With regard to this difficulty of making yourself understood to the "wild" men—if in India or Burma it is also easy to get some men amongst your followers with a knowledge of Hindustani or English, as well as of the local dialects, who will interpret for you both in camp and out hunting. When in the near presence of game you get on quite well with your men, however wild, by means of signs alone.

The Somālīs are strict Mahomedans, and do not therefore drink anything alcoholic. They are, however, convivial souls, having a proverb "He who dines alone, dines with the devil," and are fond of dancing and singing together round the camp fire after their evening meal. One man will sometimes execute a *pas seul*, the rest clapping their hands in time to his measure.

A characteristic of the Somālī is his avariciousness. Apart from rewards for recognised services—chiefs of tribes through whose country you may pass will visit you with pomp and circumstance, attended by many armed horsemen and footmen, the former in all the bravery of tasselled saddlery and gaudy "tobes," and will always expect presents. Acceptable presents are tobes (cotton sheets—

coloured or plain—the usual dress of Somālis, and worn by them in the manner of a toga or burnous), coloured handkerchiefs, shawls, blankets, and clasp knives. A stock of these things should therefore be taken.

To give an example of Somāli avarice: one morning, at the end of a march, news was brought in by some men from a karia in the vicinity that a lion had killed a girl a few days before. I sent my hunters to tie up a donkey in a likely place and look for tracks, and promised five rupees reward for news that would lead to my seeing the lion. Talking with the karia people in the evening, they said I ought to give more than that, on which my headman raised a general laugh at their expense by telling them to keep their lion and let him take some more girls!



CHAPTER II.

LION.

Somāli - - - - - Libah.

MY only experience with lion has been in Somāliland. As they ordinarily rest and lie very close during the day, and only wander in quest of prey at night, they are rarely come upon unless specially looked for. There are men who have spent years in the wilds of Africa and have never seen a lion.

It is little use discussing the size of lions, as the lengths on record have been obtained by various methods of measurement. The correct way to measure the lengths of lions, tigers, etc., is *straight between uprights*.

Many lions have no manes to speak of. It is probably a matter of climate. Lions on elevated plateaux are said to have better manes and coats than those inhabiting low-lying districts.

Lions are frequently found together. Sometimes two or three males will hunt in company, or a male and several females. The lion is a polygamist. Even troops of full grown males and females with cubs of different ages, numbering twenty or more, have been recorded. It is unlikely, however, that parties consisting of more than one full-grown lion with lionesses hold long together, as the sexual passions of the lions would not permit it without fighting.

According to the consensus of authority on the subject, the lioness goes with young three and a half to four months, and produces from two to four at a birth. If so, some must generally die early, as a lioness is seldom seen with more than two cubs. They stay with their mother till two or three years old. Mr. Selous states in his work, "African Nature Notes," that though he has often seen young lions and lionesses with their mothers, which must have been at least two years

old, he has never seen a lioness accompanied by cubs of different ages. The inference therefore is that a lioness gives birth to cubs at long intervals of not less than three years.

Lions are great wanderers. They conform to the movements of the herds of antelope. Hartebeest and oryx are their favourite food in Somäliland. Karias (the encampments of the nomadic tribes), when changing their ground for fresh pasturage, are frequently followed by lions. Where there are karias, whether temporarily settled or on the march, there are generally attendant lions on the look out for camels, cattle, etc., though donkeys come first in their estimation when they can get them. Travellers' and sportsmen's camps are likewise sometimes followed and raided.

Lions are very bold at night, and will prowl close round karias and camps, seeking an opportunity to enter. The extent to which lions are feared can be judged by the precautions taken by Somälis against them. A karia is surrounded by a double thorn fence or zariba. The outer fence is usually ten to twelve feet high. The camels, cattle, sheep, and goats, are placed at night in the space between the fences. Ponies are usually tied to the huts. A camp in lion country is always protected by a high thorn or brushwood fence. However long the march and however little daylight might be left at the end of it, I never knew my followers to neglect to build a substantial fence round our camp. The materials for it were plentiful in the adjacent bush, but it meant some two hours' work. Yet it was invariably done so as to completely enclose camp and the animals. One or two narrow passages would be arranged in the fence, to be filled up at night with thorny branches, which were removed in the morning. Fires were kept up all night, and sentries told off by the headman. I never remember to have seen a sentry otherwise than standing and alert.

The lion's roar carries for a distance of some miles on a still night. Several lions roaring in unison make a grand concert, shaking the air with their hoarse, deep voices. They often roar in the evening when commencing their nightly wanderings. It seems strange they should do this: the natural supposition would be that they would be careful at such a time to give as little warning as possible to any animals in the neighbourhood. This evening roaring is generally lower than the full-throated roaring frequently made by lions after they have killed and fed, but can nevertheless be heard for a considerable distance. The sound may perhaps be described as a kind of moaning grunting of a menacing character, rather than as roaring.

On actually sighting prey, they no doubt become absolutely silent till they have killed or failed in the ensuing stalk.

Herr Schillings, Swayne, and other sportsmen, give instances of lions lying for hours concealed and silent, watching water at night that they were themselves watching.

With regard to the manner in which a lion seizes his prey, most evidence goes to show that he fixes his teeth in the neck, places one paw over the shoulder, the other over the muzzle, and jerks the head till the neck is broken, either by the jerk or by the animal falling with bent head in the struggle. There is a flashlight photograph taken by Herr Schillings in his book, "With Flashlight and Rifle," of a lioness seizing a tied up bullock. She is about to bite into the back of the neck, and has one paw on the top of the neck just in front of the withers, but the position of the other paw is not clear. In this photograph a lion is seen walking up a few paces from the bullock. Herr Schillings writes that he has more than once noticed in his night sittings over baits, that if a lion and lioness approach, it will be the lioness who will be the first to seize. It is the opinion of many hunters that a lioness is more likely to charge than a lion.

Man-eaters are said to be usually old lions whose strength is declining, but there have been many cases recorded of man-eating lions in the prime of life. It is doubtless a matter of opportunity or temptation. The Somālis believe most lions will attack a man that comes in their way if they are hungry. Human beings are seized by the head, neck, or shoulders.

After killing, a lion usually cleans out the entrails and commences his meal on the hindquarters. Having fed, he goes to the nearest water and drinks, and then proceeds to lie up in cover. The spot he selects for lying up will usually be within a mile of the kill, and sometimes within a quarter of a mile, or even close by it. He will visit the kill the following night and probably again the third night if anything is left. This is according to my experience in Somāliland and from what I could gather in conversations with the natives.

Lions will feed on any carcass they come across. A carcass if not hidden may cause the assemblage of vultures, which, circling above it, may occasionally be observed from a great distance, and Somālis are of opinion that lions, on seeing such signs, will make for them in hopes of securing a feed. It is always worth while on noticing a concentration of vultures to proceed to investigate. If they are circling over a place or remaining on trees without descending to the ground, it may mean there is a lion on or near his kill. I have several times been

asked by my hunters to shoot antelope and leave them (only taking away the heads and skins) on the chance of their attracting lions, and have adopted the plan, but without result. One day I shot six antelopes for this purpose, lion tracks one or two days old having been seen. The next morning on visiting the carcasses we found that vultures had left little but bones. There were no traces of lion.

The general form of the track of a lion's forefoot, if clearly imprinted, is as illustrated (about a quarter size). It must be remembered that the footprint of any animal is rather larger than the foot itself when off the ground, since the foot is enlarged by pressure. The hind foot is narrower than the fore.

The tracks of a lioness are smaller than those of a lion, and her fore foot track is very like his hind foot track.



FIG. 1.

Claw marks do not show in tracks unless a lion is startled or about to spring. The claws of all the cat family are retractile, the points being thereby kept off the ground, so that the felines can move noiselessly on soft pads, and keep their claws sharp, to be shot out when required for use.

There are two general methods of shooting lions in Somāliland. One is to sit up at night over a "kill"; the other, to follow up the tracks from a kill and hunt the lion by day.

In carrying out the former method, "sitting up," a small zariba, having a height of eight or nine feet and a diameter of five or six, is made within three paces of the kill with a hole in the fence for shooting through. Somālis say this sometimes succeeds. I tried it only once, and no lion came. There was very little left of the kill, however, and it was two days old, so probably the lion had finished with it. But it seems reasonable to suppose that this way can rarely be successful. To erect a mass of brushwood and thorns by the kill must

plainly indicate danger to the lion if he returns to feed; and the scent of man, so close and on the ground, must surely be carried to him. It may be thought that as lions are so bold at night, and will prowls close round a camp full of men, with fires, etc., and even endeavour to get in and carry off man or beast, that the presence of a small zariba with a man or two inside near their kill would not deter them from coming up to it. But the cases are evidently quite different. A lion's experience tells him that an encampment is a normal affair. He knows it has not been put there with any special purpose regarding himself, and he hopes to get an opportunity of snatching a meal out of it. But when he has killed an animal, deposited it at a spot of his own choosing, and returns to it for another feed, he will doubtless be well aware of any change in the appearance of the place; and so startling a one as an erection of brushwood by it, or the scent of man, will make him instantly on the alert, and put suspicions of a trap or of measures directed against himself into his mind.

If sitting up is decided on, it should be in a tree if possible, where the scent of man will be carried too high for discovery, and where a lion will not be likely to suspect danger. It is well known that lions, like tigers, rarely look upwards for an adversary. Not being tree-climbers themselves, it seems not to occur to them to do so. Leopards, on the contrary, being tree-climbers, will look up instinctively for an enemy. Suitable trees are not common in Somāliland. There is often nothing but bush. If there is one anywhere near, the kill might be dragged to it, and a "machān" or platform made in the tree at a height of twelve to fifteen feet. The greater the height the more difficult of course will be a night shot. Somālīs consider that a lion, if not finding his kill where he left it, will think it has been dragged away by some animal, and will nose it up till he comes upon it, even to a considerable distance. I have known my hunters drag the remains of a kill nearly a mile, and peg it down close outside the camp zariba, commanded by a loophole, with fair confidence of the lion turning up to claim it during the night. But the event never came off.

No doubt lions have often been bagged by sitting up over a kill, and in thick bush country it is pretty well the only system on which to work; but with one exception I got mine by the usual Somālī way of following up the tracks from a kill in the day time, with horsemen to assist in bringing the lion to bay. This method is peculiar, I believe, to Somāliland, where the powdery red soil and open bush, favourable

for tracking and riding, found on many parts of the Haud, render it practicable. Where the bush is thick or the ground very difficult, as when cut up by ravines, it is impossible.

It is an exciting and sporting way of getting your lions. It usually means camping in the vicinity of karias, both on account of the greater likelihood of receiving news of kills and the facilities for engaging horsemen.

Having decided on a place to camp for some days where indications and news show there are lions about, you send word round to any karias within say ten miles, promising rewards for news of fresh kills, and requesting the assistance in that event of a few horsemen to ride for you. Your hunters will also be out daily looking for kills or fresh tracks, and you may have some horsemen of your own with you. One of my Somāli syces was a smart, bold rider, and used to assist on my spare pony.

On receiving news of a kill you start off as soon as possible if there is sufficient day left and your men can be collected. If not, you go early the next morning. A lion will not go very far from his kill for a couple of days as a rule, as it takes him that time at least to finish it. If there are several lions engaged, the carcase (unless that of a big animal) may be finished at a meal.

Arrived at the kill, you take up the freshest tracks (those showing the clearest cut edges), going as quietly as possible, with your hunters and a few spearmen. Your horsemen (probably three or four in number) follow you at about two hundred yards distance. On starting the lion, if you fail then and there to shoot him, and he gets away wounded or unwounded, or if, without having seen him, the suddenly increased size and deeper impress of the tracks show he has gone away at a run, you signal up the horsemen, who at once gallop forward, extending as they go, and endeavour to view the lion. If one of them succeeds in doing this he halloas to the others, indicating the direction of the lion with his spear, and they close in to also view and keep the game in sight. They ride behind and to either side of the lion, fifty or sixty yards from him, until he turns round and faces them. This he as a rule very soon does when he hears the clattering of the horsemen behind him. Having thus brought him to bay, they rein up, forming a semi-circle in front of him at the distance mentioned, ready to wheel their ponies and gallop off if he charges; then to turn again and form round him as before when he stops, or to press the pursuit if he attempts to retreat, and again bring him to bay. It is difficult work for them where the bush becomes at all thick. It

requires a quick eye and good riding. The lion may suddenly crouch in grass or bush, and one of the horsemen may run the danger of riding in too close to him before being aware of it. If the lion disappears into a big piece of cover, they will post themselves in the more open ground, endeavouring to watch all sides of it.

When they have succeeded in bringing the lion to bay, they will shout and chant a hunting song to proclaim the fact and guide you to the place. For it is better for you and your hunters to keep on the tracks, in case the riders lose the lion, until you hear the shouts and song that announce their success, when you can leave the tracks and hurry up to them.

On arriving near them, you will see the stimulating scene of the lion crouching or standing up, angry and defiant, with switching tail, facing the horsemen sitting in their saddles with tightened rein fifty or sixty yards away, alert and ready to wheel and fly if he charges, or to continue the pursuit if he retreats. It is now your business, supported by your hunters and spearmen, to walk up to within close range, thirty or forty yards, or nearer if a clear shot owing to grass, etc., cannot be obtained otherwise, and kill the lion. I say thirty to forty yards because it is necessary to make sure of a deadly or at least disabling shot, as the lion, being by this time in a high temper, will most certainly charge home against whatever odds on being fired at, unless disabled, and somebody will be hurt. You may, of course, stop him with your left barrel, but it is better to make sure with the first and standing shot.

If the lion has been marked into a large piece of cover, and his position is consequently unknown, you must, with your men in a compact party, take up his tracks into it, and kill him in it or drive him out, when the riders outside will again pursue.

If you have a fancy for riding with your horsemen and trying to shoot the lion from horseback, you will probably find this a more uncertain way than by acting as described, that is, by sticking to the tracks and coming up on foot with your hunters and spearmen when the lion has been brought to bay. For if riding the lion yourself, you can only take a light rifle or carbine in hand, with which your shot—fired from horseback—will be more uncertain and less effective than when fired on foot with a heavy rifle. If you go in close—within forty yards—the lion will be as likely as not to charge and catch you (unless you inflict a disabling hit) before you can wheel your pony and get up any pace, hampered as you will be by your rifle. If you dismount to fire, your position, unsupported by any second-gun bearer or

spearman on foot, will be very dangerous, your life depending on the result of a shot from a light rifle.

I met Count W——, an Austrian sportsman, in Somāliland, who had killed several lions by riding with his men with a carbine ; but he had a narrow escape from the last one he had so hunted, the lion having caught him up as he galloped off after firing, and clawed his pony's quarter before he got up enough speed to get clear. He got clear somehow, but I forget the details.

Colonel Swayne (who commanded the Somāli levies in the late operations against the Mad Moollah) on one occasion shot a lion from horseback. He had just killed a lioness (on foot) that was mauling his brother, when a Somāli galloped up to say that a lion had been brought to bay by the horsemen ; so he got on the man's pony and, riding after them, found that they had run the lion to a standstill in a patch of grass. He walked his pony towards the grass, and when he was sixty yards from it, the lion raised his head to have a look at him. Swayne pulled up and, dropping the reins, fired, judging for the chest. The lion charged, and the hunter had only time to pick up the reins, go about, and become the hunted on a tired pony, when the lion dropped dead close to him ; otherwise he would have been caught before he could have got any pace on. It was found the bullet had entered the chest and a piece of it had passed clean through the heart ; yet the lion had nearly made good his charge.

It is a fine and inspiring sight to see your horsemen, with their picturesque arms and dress, their tobes fluttering in the wind, riding a lion with dash and skill on their active, handy ponies. If the ground is at all broken and difficult, a lion will perhaps not run straight, but dodge in and out of the nullahs, giving vent to his wrath in grunting roars, until finally brought up, and you may thus get a good view of the whole run with its turns and chances.

I had been searching for lions for some time south and south-west of the great Toyo Plain in the central parts of the Haud, but had been quite unsuccessful in finding any, till, continuing to move in a generally westerly direction, I approached the Hargeisa-Milmil caravan route. Two or three marches east of this track, in the month of July, I first obtained reliable news of lion. My hunter (named Jāma), looking about in the neighbourhood, sent in news to camp from a karia nine or ten miles away of a lion having killed a donkey near it two days before, and wanted us to bring on the camp there at once. So we loaded the camels and in a couple of hours came upon Jāma with some men of the Habr Awal tribe. We

followed the lion's tracks to where he had taken the donkey into a bit of high grass. Most of the carcass was eaten. The tracks about were of the previous day. As it was then getting late, we made for our new camp. The next morning we were up early and proceeded to look for the lion. I had two men besides my syce (named Abdi) to ride for me, and some other men on foot with spears. On arriving at the place where we had seen the remains of the donkey, we found they had been carried away by a hyena. We looked about and came upon the last night's tracks and dung of the lion. We followed up the tracks with occasional difficulty, our average rate of progress being probably a little under one and a half miles an hour. A hundred yards or so behind my hunters (Jāma and Moosa) and myself came the three riders, followed by the rest of the men. The tracks led us through the ordinary Haud bush, the sandy, powdery nature of the soil enabling us to track. After some two hours' tracking, we suddenly saw the lion lying on his side asleep about forty yards off. I advanced by myself with an eight-bore rifle to twenty-five yards from him, and, not liking to go nearer in case he might awake, and lose me a steady shot, fired at his shoulder. The slanting position of his body lying on the ground did not offer a very good mark, and I failed to kill him then and there as I should have done, for he jumped up at the shot and made off with a short roar, receiving my left bullet before he disappeared. We went on, found blood, and took up the trail. The riders were slow in getting forward, and on account perhaps of the rather thick nature of the bush, did not see the lion. So all we could do was to follow up. In about ten minutes the blood ceased, and I began to get anxious, thinking I had only grazed the lion; but following on the tracks, in about ten minutes more, Jāma suddenly saw him under a thick thorn bush, only a dozen paces away. I could not see him at first, and then getting an indistinct view, fired into what I could see. Taking my second rifle I saw the lion more clearly as he moved about and roared, and finished him with a shot in the shoulder. My first lion. I had fired five shots. When the lion was seen to be dead, the men raised a hunting song of triumph and pulled him out from under the thorn tree. He was not a big lion—only 8ft. 3in. from nose to end of tail (measured straight between uprights), with a poor mane. The length to root of tail was 5ft. 6in. There were five bullet holes in or through his body. I could not make out where my first shot hit, but the second, fired as he was making off, caught him in the right hind quarter.

There are a few points worth noting regarding this affair. The kill

was three days old when we followed up the lion. He had been near it in the night (as shown by the night's tracks) but had finished with it, going away about three miles to sleep and leaving it to the hyenas. Coming upon the lion asleep, not concealed by cover, was a great piece of luck, which was not taken full advantage of through bad shooting, caused probably by over anxiety to get my first lion. I only took eight-bore and .303 rifles to Somāliland, and when I saw the kind of country it was, and that I should often have to shoot my lions at close quarters in bush and grass, I decided to use the heavy rifles on them. The skin pegged out 9ft. 1 in.

A few days later Jāma, who was out scouting, sent in word saying he had got news of lion, and asking me to move camp to where he was, seven or eight miles north-west. The place was called Laftalebedallawalla, a name fortunately of exceptional length even in Somāliland. Jāma met me on our arrival there and said there were lots of lions about. In the evening two men came and reported they had seen a lioness kill a gerenuk (Waller's gazelle) that morning twelve miles away. So the next day, no nearer news having come in, we proceeded to look up this lioness. On the way I saw a leopard sunning itself on a low anthill, but not in time to get a shot. On arrival at the place where the gerenuk had been killed we found the fresh tracks of the lioness, and followed them up. We had not been long doing so when Jāma saw the lioness in thick bush about forty yards off. I could not make her out, but after a time saw something that might be she, and fired into it. The shot was answered by a low roar and the retreat of the lioness through the bush. Abdi and another man I had riding for me immediately galloped forward after the shot, and heading the lioness, brought her to a stand a few hundred yards further on. There was blood on her tracks showing I had hit her, though I could not be sure that I saw her when I fired. We heard Abdi's song of triumph where he and the other rider had brought up the lioness, and came in sight of him and the lioness about the same time. She was standing in a thicket fifty or sixty yards away: between the thicket and ourselves for thirty yards the ground was clear and open. I fired my right at her. When the smoke cleared I saw her charging straight at me, with grunting roars, across the open space. She ran low to the ground and came on very fast. Jāma standing on my left, fired at her with an eight-bore; Moosa fired the .303 and ran away (I had given instructions the night before that they could fire in case of a charge). I reserved my fire till she was pretty close, then fired my left. It must have gone under her, but made her

swerve off me and spring on Jāma, getting him under her on the ground and mauling him. I rammed a cartridge into my rifle as quickly as I could (but the breech action unluckily worked rather stiffly), and while doing so saw my three spearmen spearing the lioness. When I had got a cartridge in I placed the muzzle of my rifle between her shoulders as she struggled on the spears, and gave her a finisher. She had made a gallant charge against great odds, got home, and inflicted what damage she could in the short time allowed her.

Jāma had some very ugly scalp wounds and some deep fang holes in his left shoulder and arm. The blood was streaming down him. The promptitude of the spearmen—foremost among whom was a camelman named Abdulla—saved his life. We got him home on a pony as soon as possible, but it was a twelve mile ride at a slow walk. On reaching camp I cleaned the wounds and injected carbolic acid solution, and stopped the holes with plugs of lint soaked in carbolic oil.

This was a very unlucky affair for which my bad shooting was to blame. No doubt eight-bores are not very handy for smart shooting. Though good for elephant and rhinoceros, something less heavy is better for lion—such as a twelve-bore or .577. The skin of the lioness pegged out 9ft. 6in., but was spoilt by numerous spear thrusts. I well rewarded the spearmen, especially Abdulla, who was the first to spear, and to whom I further gave the skin as “the reward of valour.” Spears are very useful against a lion actually struggling with a man, for there is great danger of hitting the man if you fire at the lion under those circumstances. Spears, however, in good hands, can be used with effect.

Regarding my remark as to the lioness in her charge running low to the ground and very fast, it is worth while quoting the following description by Colonel Swayne, R.E. (in his book “Seventeen Trips through Somāliland”) of the way a lioness charged him from a distance of about seventy yards:—“She *ran extended along the ground**, like a greyhound, and came so fast that I had only time to raise my rifle, and when the bead of the foresight was somewhere under her chin, I fired. Quickly shifting my finger to the left trigger when she was only five yards away, I pulled again, and then jumped to one side, the rifle still at my shoulder. I remember nothing more, except that her head came through the smoke and I was half conscious

* The italics are mine.

of being lifted off my feet and sent flying through the air, with the lioness hanging on to my shoulder, growling horribly!"

Colonel Swayne was badly mauled, and his life only saved by his brother running in close and killing the lioness with a bullet in the chest as she turned on him. Their Somāli hunters had retreated. Colonel Swayne's bullets had gone low, both passing through the lioness's right foot, which he attributed to rather stiff triggers making him jerk them off.

I treated Jāma's wounds by taking out the lint plugs daily, syringing with carbolic acid solution, and restopping them with fresh plugs of lint soaked in carbolic oil, to keep the wounds from closing at the top till they were healing up from the bottom. After a few days a Somāli man of medicine arrived, who took charge of Jāma at his own request. He preferred the Somāli treatment to mine, though he seemed getting on nicely. The wounds were stopped with some native preparation, the first effect of which was to increase the swelling of the arm and shoulder, and cause great pain. However, in ten days from being mauled, Jāma was fit to travel, and I sent him to his home with a pony to do the marches on, a tent, the Somāli doctor and other men to attend him, and a camel to carry the kit of the party. He was well consoled financially. On my return to Berbera in October he met me there, quite well and cured.

Even before I sent Jāma away he was fit to do a short march of a few miles on a pony with two men to lead it and assist him in any way he wanted. I was making a march like that in the direction of Gudaweina on the caravan route, when we came upon the night's tracks of three lions. I therefore pitched camp at once and followed them up, but lost them after an hour or so owing to their having been washed out by heavy rain which had fallen that night. On my return to camp I found some men from a karia at Gudaweina, who said that lions roared nightly round their karia, and that they had seen two lions in the morning a few miles away.

About an hour after nightfall we heard the distant roaring of some lions, which gradually drew closer and closer. According to our custom in lion country, a donkey had been tied up outside the camp zariba within two yards of a hole through the hedge commanding it. As the lions came nearer the men took their spears to be ready for action, and I put a white band round the barrels of my rifle close to the foresight. The roaring ceased and an expectant hush fell on the camp. The lions had then doubtless seen the camp and were stealthily approaching it. After a quarter of an hour of absolute quiet on the part of the

lions, I heard a rush and a struggle as the donkey was seized and killed by them. I looked through the hole in the hedge and faintly made out the forms of two lions, one tearing and growling at the donkey, and another standing close by. I fired at the one tearing at the donkey, and the half roar, half moan, answering to the shot told me I had hit. The next instant the lion came bang against the zariba hedge. I thought it would be through and into the zariba, and retreated towards the camp fire where I should have more light for shooting. However, the lion was still outside, so I went back to the hole, the men round me with spears. After a time another lion came and began tearing at the kill, facing me. I fired again, and the roar and deep moans that followed showed the shot had been an effective one that time at any rate. Half an hour after this, one of the lions boldly came again, and—before I could make it out distinctly enough to shoot—tore the carcass loose from its fastening under the muzzle of my rifle, and made off with it. I then turned in. My sleep was very broken, and whenever I woke I heard the roaring of the lions—the full, loud roaring denoting they had fed.

We were out early the next morning, and following up the blood found a lioness dead about a hundred yards from camp. The bullet had entered her chest to one side, and in her death agony she had eaten away a place the size of a dish over her shoulder. She measured 7ft. 8in. from nose to end of tail, and 5ft. 5in. to root of tail. We then took up the trail of two lions that had gone off with the kill. Blood on the trail showed that one of them had been hit by my first shot in the night. Half a mile away we found the kill, of which the hindquarters and entrails were all eaten. There were tooth and claw marks on the throat and neck. Continuing on the tracks we came to where the lions had separated, and the blood ceased. We took up the trail of one, but whether the wounded one or not was doubtful. It led us into a piece of thick cover. By this time some riders had arrived whom we had sent for from the Gudarweina Karias. We followed the tracks through the cover, high, reedy grass and thorn bush, and found the lion had gone through into more open forest at a run. Our hopes sank, but soon afterwards, following on, the tracks turned towards the cover again and re-entered it. The lion had probably seen the horsemen, and was afraid to face the more open bush. We followed on again carefully and quietly through this thick cover, a Midgān (tribe of out-caste hunters) I had got hold of in the morning tracking admirably. Then we heard the triumphant song of Abdi outside the cover, showing he and the other riders saw the lion.

We pressed on and getting to the outer part of the cover, saw the lion with its back to us looking at the horsemen. I went very quietly up to fifty yards from it, fired, and hit with both barrels. The lion staggered about, roared, and disappeared into cover. After the first shot the lion had come round in our direction, and my headman (named Robley) said all the men ran away. Being engaged in firing at the lion I did not notice this. We found a blood trail entering very thick cover, and first worked round to discover if the trail led out of it. Not finding such, we knew the lion must be inside a bit of cover not more than fifty yards across. I then took up the blood trail again where it entered the cover, and with my spear escort round me followed it in and pushed right up to the lion. I saw it about five paces from me—just making out a patch of the yellow skin. I did not know what part of the lion this was, but fired into it. Growls and a rustling movement followed the shot, but no charge or spring. I then saw more of the lion and fired my left into it, though what part of the animal I saw I could not make out, so dense was the cover. There were growls again, but nothing further, and I took my second rifle from Moosa who did gunbearer very well on this occasion, standing close behind me. As the lion still lay there it was evidently as good as dead, but not being able to see exactly the state it was in or how it was lying, in the thick bush, we retired and determined to give it half an hour to die in before going actually up to it. After that time we again approached. The lion had been shaking the grass several times, so we knew it was still alive. Going up again within a few paces I could make out a part I took to be the head and neck, and fired several shots into it. Each shot was answered by growls. After a time the lion lay quite still: a man poked it with his spear and it did not move. We then went up and dragged it out into the open. It was a lioness. We had been rather under the impression it was a lion. When it was dragged into view Robley said "He's got no hair"—meaning mane. What I had taken to be the head and neck, and into which I had been firing, was the hindquarters! I could not make out whether this was the one hit in the night or not. The first shot fired in the morning had caught her at the back of the jaw and passed out at the cheek: the second shot, well on the shoulder. That was the one which effectually crippled her and prevented her from charging. One of the two shots fired into her at close quarters in the cover had caught her on the flank; the other I could not find. The rest were shots in the hind quarters. The lioness measured

7ft. 8in. to end of tail, and 5ft. 3in. to root of tail. We skinned her and made for camp, seeing on the way the tracks of the third lion. I wished to follow them, but the Midgān said the sun being well up would make it very difficult, and I could see the men were disinclined to do it, so did not press the matter. Robley said he would have the kill dragged back to camp and tied up there, and that the lion—if not the wounded one—would certainly come back for the meat, and scent it up from the place he had put it, to the zariba.

The skins pegged out, the one shot in the night 8ft. 9in., the one in the day 9ft. 8in. The former was rather the bigger lioness, and it was no doubt owing to her not having been skinned till some hours after death that the skin did not stretch as well as the latter, skinned immediately after being killed. However, I did not trouble to superintend the pegging out of the skins, as they were both spoilt, one by the large place gnawed out of the shoulder, and the other by the number of big bullet holes in it.

The carcasses of the lioness shot close to camp, and of the donkey, were tied securely outside the zariba by a rope passing through the hedge to a bush inside, but they were not visited by a lion or any other animal, and the next day we moved camp to new ground where we had heard news of more lions.

I had no more lion-shooting worth recording until we arrived near Harrhe Hill (over 6000 feet high), a few miles from the Abyssinian frontier, and still in the Habr Awal country. There I made the acquaintance of a chief of the tribe named Askar, and his brother, Deria, who offered to show me lion and ride for me. They were assisted by four other horsemen, relatives I believe of the chief, and practised lion-hunters. They wore coloured gala tobies out hunting, and were all mounted on grey ponies of a superior stamp, with full-dress saddlery. It was "pretty" to see them riding lion.

The plan adopted was (without having received any particular news) to form a line, with a front of about half a mile, of the riders and my own men, and move over likely country on the look out for lions or their tracks.

We had done this in different directions without success for several days—the days being either blank or lions being started in difficult country and escaping us—when one morning we came on fresh tracks of three lions. I collected the men, my hunters and myself taking up the tracks, followed at a convenient distance by the horsemen and others. In a quarter of an hour we started the lions. One of my men saw them for a moment but I failed to obtain a view, so signalled

the horsemen, and they galloped up sharp and on (extending as they went) in the direction the lions had taken, soon viewed them, and after two minutes' riding brought one of them to bay. As I hurried along I could hear the grunting roars of the lion as it was being pressed by the riders. Walking up I saw a lioness standing facing the horsemen, who formed an irregular line forty to fifty yards from her. As I came up she turned towards me. I advanced to about thirty yards from her, and shot her dead with my right, the bullet entering near the point of the left shoulder and stopping under the skin by the right thigh—a regular raker. Looking round, I then saw that Moosa, my hunter, was the only man with me. He had behaved very well, sticking close to me with my second rifle, while the spearmen had hung back. Almost immediately after I killed this lioness, another jumped up from somewhere. Away galloped my riders and soon brought it to bay. Coming up I found them pointing towards some grass, from which the foremost horseman was not thirty yards distant. After looking a little I could just see the lion's head as it crouched in the grass facing me about fifteen yards off, and shot it dead, also with my right. The bullet went in at the nose—a regular case of a "flush hit on the nose," which I believe is always considered a staggerer. Another lioness. This time my spearmen came in close by me to either hand, a little ashamed perhaps for hanging back with the first lioness. The third lion had got away. The first shot measured 7ft. 10in., the second 7ft. 5in. I was very pleased with the way the horsemen "brought to" these lions, as the ground was broken with ravines and difficult for riding.

The skins pegged out 9ft. 2in. and 7ft. 5in. The smaller skin was not properly stretched in pegging it out. I gave it to Moosa.

CHAPTER III.

TIGER.

Hindustāni - - Bāgh—Sher.

Burmese - - Chā.

My experiences with tiger have been in the Central Provinces of India and in Upper Burma.

Like all the cat family, tigers are abroad chiefly at night, and are, therefore, rarely seen by chance. You might hunt for other big game for many years and never see a tiger.

Tigers are often very carelessly measured and impossible lengths recorded. Mr. Sanderson, the author of "Thirteen Years among the Wild Beasts of India," writes—"My own experience can only produce a tiger 9ft. 6in. and a tigress 8ft. 4in. as my largest." He does not describe his method of measurement.

There is also a great difference in statements regarding the weight of tigers. For instance, Mr. Eardley-Wilmot, in his book "Forest Life and Sport in India," writes—"The weight will probably be found to vary in a full-grown male in good condition between 400 and 600 pounds." He does not say he ever actually weighed a tiger. Mr. Sanderson writes—"I have only weighed one tiger, a very bulky, well-fed male. He weighed by two different scales 349½lb., or 25 stone all but half a pound. I should have imagined this was about the extreme weight of any tiger."

Both Mr. Eardley-Wilmot and Mr. Sanderson shot a large number of tigers.

Tigers seem generally to be found singly, but are also found together—sometimes a tiger and tigress, a tiger and two tigresses, or several tigers. There was a case a few years ago of five tigers being seen at the carcass of a pony they had killed.

The tigress, like the lioness, goes with young three and a half to

four months, it is said, and produces two to four at a birth. Also, as is the case with lions, the cubs stay with the mother till two or three years of age (when they will measure six to seven feet), and the tigress will not, as a rule, breed oftener than once in three years, since cubs of different ages have never been seen with her. Nor have more than two attaining to any size, so she must fail to rear a greater number at a time. There is no fixed breeding season, though it is considered the majority of cubs are born during the first half of the year.

Tigers usually seem to have regular beats or orbits for their wanderings in search of prey. Their tracks will be found in sandy river-beds and dry water-courses (which with jungle paths form their favourite night promenades), with a difference, say, of three or four, or ten to twelve days in the ages of the tracks, showing that the tiger returns more or less frequently with fair regularity to that particular course or river-bed. In the intervals he is pursuing his usual round in some other part.

Tigers are not nearly so bold as lions at night, rarely troubling villages or camps. The great difference there is in this respect can be seen from the absence of any precautions taken to keep out tigers. Villages in tiger country are usually open, or at all events no special obstacles are raised round them, nor round camps at night. With the exception of determined man-eaters, which seem to be now less and less heard of, tigers never attempt to enter a village or a camp.

I have never heard a tiger roaring or making any sound with his voice at night. Captain Forsyth, in his book "The Highlands of Central India," relates how he listened to two tigers roaring near his camp one night; and writes—"the effect in the clear, cold night was very fine. The night voice of the tiger has a very impressive sound, conveying, though not nearly so *loud* as the bray of a jackass, the idea of immense power, as it rolls and trembles along the earth." On another occasion at night he heard the roaring of two tigers attracted by the call of a tigress, which he described as—"A peculiar long wail, like a drawn out mew of a huge cat." This was answered from a long distance away by the tigers, who approached the tigress from opposite directions, roaring as they came. After a time there broke out "a din like the caterwauling of midnight cats magnified a hundredfold," and in the morning were found all the signs of a fight between the tigers.

Sanderson speaks of the "distant, low, grating voice" of a tigress returning to her kill.

A tiger, according to the consensus of opinion on the subject, kills an animal as a lion does, by biting and breaking the neck, wrenching it with one paw over the muzzle, the other over the shoulder. A human being will be seized by the head or neck. A tiger will apparently sometimes dash about in a herd, striking out with his paws and bringing down an animal like that, either if he has failed in his first rush to seize a particular one or, if after killing it, others come near in their panic. I once received news of a kill of two bullocks out of a herd, and going to the place found one dead, killed in the usual manner, dragged into a small nullah, and the hindquarters eaten, and the other lying down unable to move through blows received with ripping claws on a hip and hind leg.

After killing, a tiger drags the body to a secluded spot (into high grass for choice), unless the place is already satisfactory in that respect; he then cleans out the entrails and commences feeding on the buttocks. In all these matters it will be observed that tigers and lions act in the same way.

Under normal circumstances, after his feed, the tiger drinks at the nearest water and "lies up" not far off. Until the sun is up, however, he will not really settle down. He then selects a resting and sleeping place for the day. But the distance he will drag his kill and the distance he will lie up from it, depend on the quietness and remoteness of the scene of the kill. If he is unsuspicious and undisturbed, he will remain near his kill till he has finished it, the time taken depending on its size, but will generally be within three days. A tigress with big cubs may finish their kill in a day.

Deer and village cattle are the tiger's usual prey. Bison and wild buffalo are too much for him to tackle; but I have found fresh tracks of a tiger and of bison cows and calves together, showing that the tiger was probably following the herd on the look out for a chance at a young cow or calf. He is fond of pig, but will seldom attack a big wild boar. Leopards and bears on seeing a tiger will avoid a meeting, but a boar has been known to dispute the right of way and to kill a tiger that has attacked him. There are many recorded cases of tigers feeding on carcasses not of their own killing.

The tiger's track is similar in appearance and size to the lion's, of which an illustration is given in the second chapter. The fore foot in the cat family is always wider and rounder than the hind.

There are two general methods of tiger-shooting in the Central

Provinces and Burma. One is to "sit up" over a kill: the other, to beat over the scene of a kill. There are various other methods that can be employed as opportunity or fancy dictates, such as sitting up over a live bait, beating any cover—independently of the matter of kills—wherein a tiger is probably lying, quietly approaching a kill to shoot the tiger at it, following up a tiger from his kill, or by other ways that may suggest themselves according to circumstances.

In the heavy grass jungles of the Terai and Assam the custom is to beat over a large extent of country with a line of elephants, but I have had no experience of this.

To consider the two general methods mentioned. First—"Sitting up."

A tiger will be more wary in returning to a "tied-up" kill* than a "natural" kill, but the precautions to be taken are much the same in either case. On receiving news of a kill you go with four or five men carrying your impedimenta for a night watch, and with axes to make a "machān"—that is, a wooden platform four to five feet square, or six to seven by four if you want to lie down. No more men than necessary should be taken, and everything be quietly done. As the tiger will probably be lying up in the vicinity of the kill, materials for the machān, such as the beams and sticks required for the platform and ladder, in cutting which a certain amount of noise is unavoidable, should be prepared at a distance of not less than half a mile from the kill as quietly as possible, and can then be carried to the selected tree. Quietness and low talking are enjoined, because, though it may be impossible to prevent the tiger being aware that men are near his kill, yet, the less noise they make while there, the less likely will he be to become alarmed to the extent of not returning to his kill. I think the chief reason that tigers so seldom return to their kills when "sat up" for, is that they have been disturbed or "put off" by the machān builders making much more noise than necessary.

If there is no suitable tree close enough to the kill, it must be dragged within night shooting distance of the nearest one. In the same way, if the kill is found hidden by grass, or in shade that would make night shooting difficult, it must be dragged to where it can be properly seen. Authorities on this matter are of opinion that a tiger

* By a tied-up kill is meant the carcass of an animal that has been tied up as a bait and killed by a tiger or leopard.

is not deterred from approaching his kill by finding it dragged a little way, so long as he can see it from the point at which he placed it and expects to find it. For it would seem he does not attempt to "nose up" his kill if dragged out of his sight. Mr F. C. Hicks, in his work "*Forty Years among the Wild Animals of India*," writes regarding this—"I have also frequently seen this illustrated. In their wild state, panthers invariably scenting up the drag of their kills when it had been removed, but I cannot recall a single instance of ever having seen a tiger do so, though I have frequently seen them wander round more or less aimlessly in circles looking for their removed kill."

A moonlight night is, of course, the best; but, even when there is no moon, the usual cloudless starlight Eastern nights give enough light to shoot by within a range of ten yards, especially if the kill can be placed on sandy or light-coloured ground, which helps to show up the carcass. There have been some special electric contrivances introduced lately in India for throwing light suddenly on a kill on a dark night, worked by the finger near the trigger-guard. I have not tried them, but, according to accounts published, several tigers have been shot by using them that would not otherwise have been bagged.

There are a few recorded cases of tigers coming up to a kill on which a light was thrown by a small lantern suitably suspended or attached to a convenient tree. Leopards, it is well known, will frequently come up to their kills with such a light falling on them, but it is as yet a doubtful point if tigers will do the same except on rare occasions. The idea is that those which do so think it is merely moonlight—or shall we say "mere moonshine."(!) Also you may adopt the way of having one of your men with you on the machān to throw the light from a dark lantern or electric flashlight, at an agreed signal, on the tiger. It is said that when this is done a tiger or leopard will remain—at all events a few seconds—astonished at the sudden appearance of the light, thus giving you time for a shot. The great disadvantage of this method is the presence of your man on the machān. It is much easier for one man to keep quiet than two. If you "sit up" with a native companion you must be careful to select a man you can rely on to keep quite still, and not troubled with a desire to cough or clear his throat.

Good night sights are made by sewing two bands of white cloth about 3 in. wide round the barrels, one close to the foresight, the other to the backsight. This does fairly well of itself, but is improved

by cutting a V in a plain visiting card  (as recommended by Captain Glasfurd in his book "Rifle and Romance in the Indian Jungle"), placing the apex of the V close against the foresight, and sewing the white band over the rest of the card. Then the horns of the V are turned up. In aiming you will get the object between the horns.

The machān should be twelve to fifteen feet off the ground. The nearer the ground the better for shooting at night, but if lower than 12 ft.—apart from the danger—there is more chance of being winded, or perhaps seen, by the tiger. I do not think, however, tigers are quick to scent either man or beast.

The best way to "sit up" is in a chair. There are many sorts of light camp chairs which with a cushion are quite comfortable, and in which you can sleep or doze if you want to. You are sure to sleep lightly under the circumstances, and would be awakened by the sound of a tiger feeding on the kill. A cloth or small carpet should be placed on the machān, under the chair, to prevent the sound made by wood against wood which may be caused by moving in your seat. You should take up your position two hours before sunset, and the time to be specially alert is, from then till two hours after dark. If he comes at all the tiger will most probably arrive during those hours. Sitting in a chair on the machān you are conveniently placed for observing and shooting without changing your position, and thereby possibly causing the machān to creak. Take care to have a clear view round you. A tiger will rarely look up, and if you fix high branches to all sides with the idea of hiding yourself, you will find your view restricted, and may lose chances. A few branches secured at certain points of the machān in a way that, while partially covering you, will not interfere with a general view all round, will be sufficient. The ladder should be removed and concealed a little way off, as, if left against the tree, it might attract the attention of the tiger as something strange. You should have food and water with you, not necessarily for the night, but in case you wound a tiger that has to be followed up in the morning, and which may involve many hours' work.

I always sat up alone and sent all the men back to camp or their village, telling them to return half an hour after daybreak, and not before, even if they heard me fire, as if there was a wounded tiger about they might stumble on him in the dark.

If there are vultures, crows, or jackals at the kill, the sudden rising into the trees of all the birds, or the running away of the jackals, will denote the approach of the tiger. His approach may have been even

sooner indicated by the startled bark of a deer or the chattering of monkeys. When monkeys see a tiger they become very excited, and spring about in the trees swearing at him. On one occasion, when sitting up for a tigress which had killed a tied-up bait, I heard monkeys swearing at her, 100 to 150 yards away, for half an hour after nightfall. I suppose her suspicions had been aroused by something, for she never came up to the kill, of which she had eaten very little.

As you sit in the stillness of the night there will be a constant slight pattering noise of dropping dew, or rustle of falling leaves, which latter sound you may at times mistake for the movements of the tiger.

"Sitting up" is generally disappointing work so far as getting a tiger is concerned, whatever fascinations it may possess for the student of Nature. The late General Sir Montague Gerard, a soldier of distinction and a well-known tiger slayer, left it on record—in an article in the *Badminton Magazine* I think—that he had sat up about 300 nights for tiger. He said he took all the usual precautions, but with the poor result of one tiger killed and one wounded for all those nights of sitting up. He added that he generally slept during a part of the night, and quite as comfortably as in a tent. In fact, in hot weather his sleep would be more refreshing in the cool height of a tree than in camp. He considered tigers extraordinarily wary when returning to their kills. He would often hear sounds, such as the occasional snapping of a small stick and gentle rustling, indicating that the tiger was walking round and round him, with occasional prolonged motionless halts, keeping well hidden by the jungle and the darkness. Then there would be nothing more heard. The tiger had become aware of his presence in some way, perhaps by hearing some slight movement of his during one of the listening halts, and had silently departed without coming up to the kill. He has known a tiger wait patiently till the moonlight on the kill changed to shade, and then come up and commence to feed concealed in the shadow.

The usual baits "tied-up" for tigers are buffalo calves from one to two years old, as they are cheaper than ordinary cattle calves, and easier to buy for the purpose—the killing of them not offending Hindoo susceptibilities. However, cattle calves are preferable in one respect—they march better than buffaloes, not being so liable to foot-soreness. It is difficult to buy calves of either kind for tiger baits in the villages. They are easiest obtained in a town.

In "tying-up" with the intention either of sitting up or of beating

over the kill, the rope should not be so strong as not to be easily broken by the tiger. My experience in this matter leads me to believe that a tiger sometimes does not make any great effort to break the rope, and, if it does not break readily, simply leaves the kill at the "tie-up," and perhaps on that account neither lies up near it nor returns to it. Hicks's experience, as related in his book, confirms this view. If the tiger is able to drag the kill away to a spot of his own choosing, he will, as a rule, lie up not far off and return to it unless disturbed. The rope I found best, and that, while strong enough to hold a calf, would easily be broken by a tiger, was a cotton one about a third of an inch in diameter, of four strands, commonly sold in all bazars.

The calf is tied up in a river-bed or on a forest path, or other place where tracks show that tigers periodically come. It is tied by a foreleg above the fetlock to a bush, small tree trunk, or stake driven into a fairly level bit of ground. If to the latter, a slight channel should be cut round the head of the stake, into which the rope can "bite," otherwise it may be pulled over the head of the stake and the calf get loose. The stake should be two to three feet long, and fixed in the ground—especially if a sandy or light soil—by a hole of the necessary depth being dug, the stake driven into the bottom of it, and the sand or earth together with plenty of stones rammed in tightly till the hole is filled up, and then well trodden down. At least two feet of stake should be underground. If these precautions are not taken, the continual tugging that some calves keep up may loosen and draw the stake. The length of rope allowed the calf should not exceed fifteen inches at the most. If longer the calf will be able to get a stronger jerk on it by sudden efforts to escape, which may snap the rope. Also it is liable to get round other things, and be weakened by fraying. If there are any stones close under the surface of the ground at the spot chosen they should be removed. I once had a calf break away on two nights from its "tie-up" on account of some stones in the ground near the stake. Through the calf constantly treading on the rope it became frayed between the feet and the stones, until the calf was able to break it. After removing the stones the rope was not again broken. A big, strong calf should have its forefeet hobbled, which will prevent it exerting much strength in pulling.

If you intend to systematically shoot by the sitting up method, you will tie up baits in all the likely places within reach of camp, have them regularly visited, and be prepared to sit up over any that are

killed. The men visiting the baits should be always supplied with new ropes, to change the old ropes if they find them frayed or weakened.

I have never got a tiger by "sitting up." The few tigers I have shot have been obtained by beating. Beating over "tied-up" kills is the surest way of getting tigers in the Central Provinces, if the arrangements are carried out properly. To do this requires judgment, care, and attention to details, which will be dealt with in a new chapter.



CHAPTER IV.

TIGER.

BEATING OVER "TIED-UP" KILLS.

A SANDY river-bed fifty or sixty yards wide, with occasional pools, taking its course through quiet jungles, is the kind of hunting ground that best lends itself to this system of tiger-shooting. There are many such river-beds in the Central Provinces. Frequently camp can be pitched between two rivers, each within easy reach—say two or three miles to either hand, which join their courses perhaps five miles away. From your central position you can then hunt both, besides their junction, or, camping near the junction, you will have three radiating river-beds for your scene of operations.

Camp should preferably be within half a mile of a village, for the facilities of obtaining beaters, and the services of men to accompany your own in visiting the baits, and yourself in looking for tracks and making machāns. The further away the village is, the more trouble and delay will there be in these matters. For instance; the baits should be visited early in the morning—an hour or two hours after sunrise, so that while lessening the risks of possibly disturbing the tiger by too early a visit, there will yet be time allowed for collecting beaters in case of a kill, and for other arrangements. The jungle people are often casual and hazy in their ideas of time. If they do not turn up at the appointed hour you can send your own men quickly to the village, if it is near, to bring them.

Tigers can be got by the system of beating over "tied-up" kills at any time of the year except during the rainy season, when the state of the jungles would make the necessary arrangements very difficult. The most preferable months in my opinion are January, February, and March. The tigers then have their cold weather coats, the climate is

pleasant, and the jungle not so heavy as just after the rains. Yet it is heavy enough, and there being good cover pretty well everywhere, a tiger is not likely to be suspicious or fastidious in seeking out his resting place, but will lie up generally close to his kill.

It is commonly said that tigers can be more easily located in the hot weather months—April and May, because they will then lie up close to water (which will be scarce) and in the evergreen covers in the river-beds, and that therefore these months are the best for tiger-shooting. It is true they are more likely to be found in such places in the very hot weather, and that in consequence, if beating “on spec” independently of kills, the hottest season would be the best. But as a matter of fact, the only way, as a rule, to satisfactorily locate a tiger, is to get him to kill an animal that you have “tied up” at a spot the features of whose surroundings you have studied with the special view to a beat; and such kills can be obtained as well in the cold weather as in the hot, by noting the promenades of tigers as shown by their tracks in sandy river-beds and nullahs. The disadvantages of the very hot weather are, that with a dried and parched up country all round, tigers will be very disinclined to be moved by beaters, and will not be so “manageable” as in the colder weather; their coats will be poor; and the intense heat will make it almost impossible for either you or your men to work with the energy and attention required.

We will now consider in detail this method of tiger-shooting by beating over “tied up” kills, and will do so in its most difficult aspect, that is, as it should be carried out in heavy and continuous jungle to bring the tiger close past a single gun. If the art of doing this is mastered, it will evidently be easier to arrange to bring a tiger up to the wider extent of ground that would be commanded by two or more guns, or to arrange a beat where well marked features of the country define its natural limits. Further, the arrangements considered will be those suitable for operations on a moderate scale within convenient reach of camp, and that therefore can be closely superintended by yourself. You will find this much more interesting and satisfactory than leaving matters to native shikāris.

It will be understood, therefore, that the methods herein treated of have nothing to do with big shoots as given by Native Princes and high officials, where all you would have to do would be to sit on an elephant or a machān, and shoot the tiger brought up to you; but are

with reference to an ordinary shoot organised by yourself "on your own," or with one or two friends, without the aid of any special influences or accessories.

The permanent hunting followers required, will be "orderlies" and herdsmen: the temporary—villagers entertained for varying periods. By "orderlies" are meant native ex-soldiers and ex-policemen, who, having been trained to shoot and accustomed to discipline, will be very useful in tiger-shooting. Ex-soldiers can be engaged by application to District Recruiting Officers. I think Punjābi Mahomedans of the Jhelum District are the most suitable, as being generally good sturdy men, and having no caste prejudices with regard to tying up calves.

By "herdsmen" are meant men engaged to look after the calves which are intended for baits: to drive them carefully on the march, letting them go slowly and graze at opportunity, so as not to harass them: to take them out to graze when in camp, water them at least twice a day, and cut a supply of grass to place before them for the night, when they are brought in and secured near camp for safety.

It is important to keep the baits in good condition even if for no other reason than that a tiger will sometimes pass by a tied up animal that is poor or thin looking, whereas a plump one is too tempting for him to refuse.

It will be a great assistance if a "chaprassi" or "peon" can be obtained through the courtesy of the Deputy Commissioner of the District you are shooting in, or of the "Zamindar" or Native Chief of the country, in case you are not in British administered territory. Such a man amongst your followers will facilitate your dealings with the villagers, and your supply arrangements. If you have been allotted a reserve forest block by the Forest Officer of the District, the forest guard (chaukidar) that will accompany you will be of the same assistance.

For a month or six weeks' tiger-shoot, you should take from a dozen to twenty calves, and engage not less than six herdsmen. It is best to engage these men at the town where you buy the calves. I say not less than six because they will play an important part as assistants in tiger-shooting, as described later, and because through fever, which is pretty sure to attack some of your people in the jungle, the number available for work may be reduced.

You will want three orderlies for the same reason, in order that you may be fairly certain of always having two fit for work.

Now we will suppose you have camped with your following complete in a locality where you expect to find tigers. The first thing to do is to find tracks that indicate tigers' regular beats. It is not much use coming across odd tracks here and there. You send for the village headman, get any information he has to impart regarding tigers, and ask him to supply a couple of men who know the jungles, to accompany you in the morning to look for tracks in the river-beds. Probably the headman will wish also to come. With these men, your orderlies, and the peon or the forest chaukidar, you examine the river-beds the next day. If you find no tiger tracks it is no use stopping there. You will move camp till you find a river-bed where there are tracks. It is no use taking much account of what villagers say unless they can show you tracks. Until you actually see tracks you have nothing to go on. When you find them, they afford you the information on which you will base your plans.

Let us suppose you have found tracks in a suitable portion of river-bed—that is to say, in a quiet part, going through undisturbed jungles, not less than a mile from a village. The sandy bed shows the tracks up pretty clearly. They are least distinguishable on dry, soft sand. Where it is moist, their impress, if of the previous night, is quite clean cut, and the edges yield or crumble instantly to the lightest touch. As they get older the edges gradually lose this "cleaness," becoming dulled and hardened as they are dried by the sun and atmosphere. The whole track through the action of the weather becomes more and more like the surrounding surface, losing the unmistakable fresh look. When the track is in dry, hard sand, the same principle in judging the age holds good—the edges losing their clear appearance and becoming blurred with age. In dry, soft sand, the edges of a fresh track are quite soft and yielding, falling away at a breath, so to say, but they become a little hard or, rather, caked with age, the whole surface of the track gradually assuming the appearance of the surrounding sand. A good way of judging the loss of freshness in a track in any kind of sand, is to press your open hand on to the sand, and note the difference between the look of the fresh impression made and that of the track. But with regard to the age of tracks it is as well to be chiefly guided by the opinion of the jungle men. The tracks are likely to be of several dates. There may be some of the night before, some judged four or five days old, others a fortnight, and still others of older dates. You follow up the tracks along the sandy reaches of the river for some distance, gaining

information of the tiger's promenades. You will take one tiger's tracks perhaps for half a mile to a mile until they ultimately turn up one bank or the other into the jungle. You may observe other tracks coming from the opposite direction. Some will be going up the river, some down. You will take the opinion of the jungle men with you as to how many tigers are indicated—tigers or tigresses, or whether all the tracks have been made by only one tiger returning at intervals of two or three to ten days or more along this portion of his usual beat. All these will be matters of interest, and finally you will select a spot at which to "tie up" close to one bank of the river, where you judge the tiger in his perambulations will easily see the bait. This is important, as unless a tiger sees it, he may pass an animal quite close—within a few yards—without detecting it, which shows his sense of smell cannot be very acute. On one occasion my bait visitors reported they had found the fresh night's tracks of a tiger passing about ten paces from a "tie up," but separated from it by rocks and bushes. The tracks showed the tiger had gone straight on, crossing the nullah the bait was in, without stopping or going nearer to it.

The "tie-up" spot must also fulfil the following conditions:—remoteness and quietness, some thick shady cover or high grass, and a pool of water. But no masses of rocks, caves, or other sort of stronghold that would come within the beat, in which a tiger would lie close and refuse to be dislodged, necessitating another kind of hunt altogether.

The tiger having quietness, cover, and water handy, will be likely to lie up near his kill till he has finished it. A calf about eighteen months old should last him two or three days.

It will be an advantage if, together with these conditions, there is a small branch nullah or dry watercourse, well defined with steep banks for a little way up from its junction, and a clear sandy bottom, joining the river-bed at the place where the bait is tied up. For the tiger after killing will then be almost certain to drag it—a little distance at all events—up the nullah, though he will probably soon leave the nullah and go on into the jungle. I have occasionally known a tiger deposit his kill actually in a nullah, but more frequently away from it. This, however, gives a clue to the direction the tiger will probably take for "lying up," and aids in planning out the beat. Such branch nullahs are frequent in the river-beds of the Central Provinces.

I have occasionally tied up two calves together, with some special idea, such as, in case of the animals being very small, giving a sufficient amount of meat to the tiger, to keep him to his kill ; or, where the signs showed a tigress and large cubs, giving even two full-sized calves for the same reason. The results have been curious or unsatisfactory. The tiger, once, killed only one of the calves, not eating any of it nor breaking the rope, and leaving the other alive and unhurt by its dead companion. He, however, lay up close by in thick cover, and was seen by my bait visitors drinking at the pool within a yard or two of the "tie up," about an hour and a half after daybreak. I did not get him as the ensuing beat was badly carried out, and the tiger lay close and slipped away through the stops in rear of the beaters. A week after he killed again (a single calf), did not break the rope (which he could easily have done), made his meal on the spot, and went right away, for the beat was blank. He had been rendered cunning by having been already once beaten for after killing a tied up bait, and would not lie up near one. I sat up the two following evenings for him, but he did not return to his kill. The morning after my second sitting up we found his fresh tracks (of the small hours of the night probably, and therefore after I had left) about thirty yards from the kill, but he had not gone nearer to it.

Another time when I tied up two ordinary sized calves together, for a tigress and cubs whose tracks had been found in the vicinity, a single tiger killed both, but only dragged away one, which he carried off for over half a mile, far beyond the limits of the beat I had arranged. It is very unusual for a tiger to drag his kill anything like this distance in quiet jungles, and I fancy he was put out by the presence of the other carcass, thinking perhaps it might lead to people coming to recover it, and so took the one he chose for his feed a long way off. However that may be, I think the best and simplest plan is to tie up single animals of sufficient size.

Well, having during the day's examination of the river-beds in the neighbourhood, selected several places for "tying up," you will go to one of them the next day with your men, and three or four villagers (carring axes and small hand scythes) handy at making machāns, taking also a calf in charge of a herdsman, to arrange the preliminaries of a beat, so that all will be in readiness in case of a "kill" there. The arrangements at each "tie up" will take four or five hours to carry out, so you will probably not do more than one in a day.

The main idea is to cut out—so to speak—a piece of jungle within which you judge the tiger will lie up after killing.

If the "tie-up" spot has been well chosen—fulfilling the conditions mentioned—the tiger will most probably lie up within 150 yards of it in a direction more or less away from the river bank. You can calculate at all events on the tiger being in the jungle on the same side of the river as the "tie up," as he would be very unlikely to drag his kill across the open river-bed to the opposite bank, instead of just taking it into the jungle close to him where he kills, and, if at the mouth of a branch nullah, almost surely up the nullah for some way: especially as you will have chosen the quieter or more remote side of the river for tying up, if there is any difference in this respect. Nevertheless, I once knew a tiger drag his kill across a river-bed about fifty yards wide, from the bank it was tied up under, to the opposite bank, and into the jungle on that side. What made this the more strange was that the side he went to was not so quiet as the tie-up side, there being a large village a little over a mile away. To cross the river-bed he swam a large pool with his kill. But this was a very exceptional case.

I arranged for a beat ordinarily in the following manner:—I "blazed" a tree on the river bank to either hand of the "tie up" some 250 yards from it. This gave a base line of about 500 yards, and marked the limits of the extension of the beaters in the river-bed. The men were told to bear in mind the position of these trees, so that they could lead on to them afterwards through the jungle. Then standing at the tie up spot I took my direction by the sun so as to walk as straight as possible through the jungle at right angles to the general river line. Having proceeded 400 to 450 paces, I selected a suitable tree in which to make a machān about fifteen feet above the ground. In some trees it is impossible to fix a machān; in others it is only possible by the aid of one or two stout poles (afforded by cutting down saplings or young trees) which can be planted in the ground so as to support the corners of the machān requiring it. Before deciding on the tree it was necessary to see if there was a nullah within a hundred yards to either side. For if there was, the tree selected had either to command the nullah or be at least a hundred yards from it; and for this reason, that any distance less than hundred yards would be too close to the machān at which to place a "tree-tapping" stop to block the nullah to a tiger, and (unless unavoidable) I never use a "silent" stop—that is, a man who would only tap when he saw the tiger approaching him—for reasons I shall give later.

A tree-tapping stop should not be closer than a hundred yards to the machān even when the cover is dense: in ordinary cover 120 to 150 yards is the right distance.

Other points that come into the question of selecting the machān tree are: if there is a clear space in the jungle near where you wish to be posted, the machān should be on the beat side of it; for a tiger on arriving at a clear space will either turn and skirt it, or cross it rapidly. It is therefore better to be posted in the cover near the beat edge of the open space, so as to catch the tiger coming quietly up to it. The cover to either hand should not be dense, for that precludes the possibility of obtaining any sort of a clear shot. By looking about a light enough bit of cover can generally be found for your position. If it cannot, the best must be made of the situation by judicious clearing of the jungle.

Having selected my tree I set the men to work to make a machān in it, and a ladder. This usually took one to two hours. All the materials for construction—including ropes formed of twisted withes of grass, or thin strips of bark—are found in the forest. While this was being done I examined the vicinity to note any peculiarities of the ground, and decided on the positions to either hand of the stops nearest to the machān. I term these "machān-stops." To decide on their positions I took a direction by the sun from the machān tree roughly at right angles to the tie-up—machān line, and moved in it counting my paces, or judging the distance. In jungle where you probably cannot walk freely for ten yards, judging the distance will be the more practicable procedure. You can judge on a tree a short distance in your direction: from that to another, and so on. If the cover was dense I would select a tree for the machān stop at about 100 yards from the machān. If ordinary forest—at 120 to 150 yards according to its nature. The reasons for these distances are, that if the jungle is dense, you want the tiger to pass you within twenty-five yards: if ordinary, within fifty yards. The sound of a man lightly tapping a tree with a stick or axe handle—carrying about 150 yards through jungle, according to its thickness—will cause a tiger to sheer off and pass him at least seventy to eighty yards away, even in dense jungle. In lighter cover it will cause the tiger to pass him at least 100 to 120 yards away. That, at any rate, is my experience.

Having selected the machān stop tree to one hand, I "blazed" it,

returned to the machān tree, and then fixed the position of the machān stop to the other hand in the same way.

The machān being ready, I mounted it, to see that it was satisfactory, that I could stand firmly and turn round freely on it, and to have branches, bushes, etc., cut away or thinned that interfered too much with view to shoot at a tiger passing within the expected distance. In effecting this, care is necessary to avoid cutting away the jungle to such an extent that it would be noticed by a tiger before he arrived near enough to offer a shot. All fallen branches, cut bushes, etc., should be removed to the rear of your post out of sight.

The advantages of being at a height of fifteen feet more or less are—quite apart from the question of safety—that it raises you above discovery by the tiger, either by his seeing or winding you; gives you as good a view as it is possible to obtain; and, last but not least, when you fire, your bullets, if they miss, go down into the ground, and do not range about to the danger of the beaters as if you fired from a low level.

These preparations having been made, I had a path cut through the grass and undergrowth (sufficient to allow of quiet walking in single file, from the machān tree to one of the machān stop trees that I had chosen. Arrived there I took a new direction in a half turn inwards towards the base or river-bed line (see plans of beats) for about seventy-five yards, selected and blazed another stop tree, then went on in the same direction a further seventy-five yards, and chose and blazed the third stop tree on that side (continuing the path). From this point I sent on two villagers to find the most direct line to the tree marked on the river bank as forming that flank of the base line, and waited with the other men till they returned. This procedure is necessary in thick jungle, where it is difficult to exactly keep a certain direction. On these men's return they led as straight as they could on to the flank base tree (a path being cut as before), and about every hundred yards I selected and blazed a stop tree. These trees should not be very hard to climb to at least fifteen feet from the ground, and be fairly comfortable to sit or stand in with the feet at that height. The distances mentioned between stops are of course only meant to be generally applicable, where no particular features of ground intervene to alter them. For instance, any nullahs come across must be "stopped." A stop tree actually in the nullah, or on its bank, or even within twenty yards of its bank will secure this. Again, where the jungle is

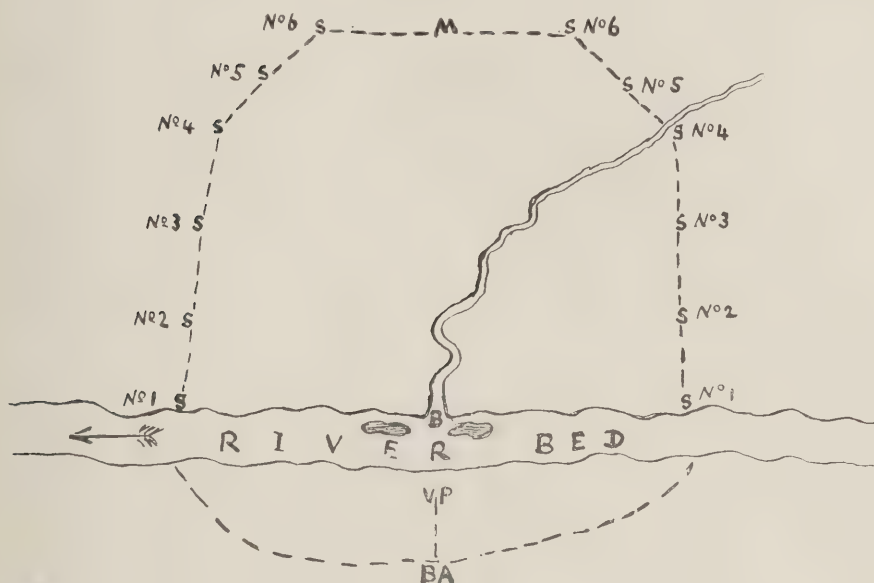


FIG. 2.—No. 1 Example.



FIG. 2A.—No. 2 Example.

very dense, the stops should be at rather closer intervals than those mentioned.

Having thus laid out the stop line on one side of the proposed beat, I retraced my steps by the path cut, and, commencing again from the machān tree, laid out the stop line on the other side in the same way.

It is necessary, in my opinion, if shooting on the system of making the machān and settling the preliminaries before a kill takes place, to thus define the stop line and mark the trees for stops, because when you have perhaps half a dozen baits out, and beats prepared, with some days' interval between kills, it would be impossible otherwise for you on your men to remember the selected trees and the exact way to them.

The proposed beat having been so far arranged, I next had a path for quiet walking cut through the jungle on the other side of the river (*see* Plans), entering it opposite the base trees. The centre of this path line, at eighty to hundred yards from the river bank, was fixed as the point for the beater's assembly, and a path was also cut from there to the bank, whence under cover the "tie up" could be clearly viewed across the river.

All these arrangements having been completed, the bait was watered, and then tied up in the manner and with the attention to detail described in the previous chapter. Grass was cut and placed by it, a last look round was taken to see nothing was lying about that might rouse a tiger's suspicions, and the locality left to the quietude of the forest, with the exception of the daily visit of the bait viewers.

In examining the plans given, it may be thought that it would always be a good thing to have the machān commanding the branch nullah, as the nullah would appear to be a natural lead for the tiger to move away by on being disturbed by the beaters. I have found a tiger more often moves away without any regard for the nullah. Still, if the nullah is not too much out of the central line—that is, a line roughly at right angles with the general line of the river or base line—it may be as well to have the machān commanding it. If, however, the stops are properly posted and obey their instructions, it really does not much matter, for the tiger will then be almost sure to pass close by the machān, whether it is on a supposed natural lead or not; and the beat is more easily managed, and therefore more likely to be successful, if the beaters can be extended on some well-defined base line—such as afforded by a river-bed—and move straight forward from it.



FIG. 3.—No. 3 Example.

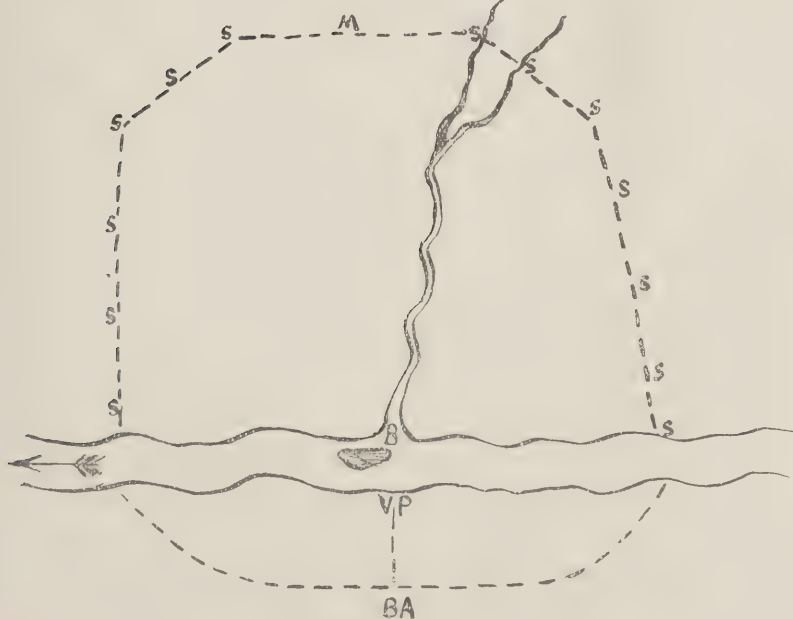


FIG. 3A.—No. 4 Example.

The references for the plans are :—

M	represents	- -	Machān.
S	„	- -	Stop.
B	„	- -	Bait.
V.P.	„	- -	Viewing Point.
B.A.	„	- -	Beaters' Assembly.
---	„	- -	Path cut through jungle.
	„	- -	Pool.
	„	- -	Nullah.

The scale is 1 inch=200 yards.

In No. 1 example, no nullahs or other features of ground occur so as to interfere with the regular intervals of the stops. The course of the nullah at the mouth of which the bait is tied up, is too much away from the central line to conveniently place the machān on it. The jungle not being very thick, the machān stops are placed about 130 yards from the machān.

In No. 2 example, nullahs coming in the way cause more stops (15) for the same extent of ground than in the first example.

In No. 3 example, the nullah not being too far out of the central line, the machān is placed commanding it. This makes the stop line longer on one side than the other. On account of the dense jungle the stops are placed at rather closer intervals than usual, and the machān stops at only a hundred yards from the machān.

In No. 4 example, the machān is placed away from the nullah, even though the latter is not far from the central line, because only an interval of fifty to sixty yards separates it from another nullah. If the machān commanded either of these nullahs, a "silent" stop would be required to "stop" the other one, since the distance is too little to allow of a "tapping" stop. Silent stops are to be avoided if possible, in my opinion, for reasons hereafter explained. Consequently the machān is placed as shown.

To view the bait you will early in the morning send your herdsman and two of the villagers who accompanied you in "tying-up," since they know the way and the position of the "viewing point." It is better to send three men, as it makes a strong enough party to give them confidence in approaching the vicinity of a possible tiger's kill. They will usually proceed so as to strike the river a little distance outside the beat limits, and then make their way along its bed, walking very quietly and saying nothing above a whisper till they

reach the path to the "beater's assembly," into which they will turn, going in the same quiet and careful manner to the beaters' assembly point. They should arrive there about two hours after sunrise, for two reasons (1) that, if a kill has taken place, the tiger will then probably be settling down for the day, and therefore less likely to become aware of men being about; (2) that, if no kill has taken place, the calf will drink more freely than it would earlier.

From the beaters' assembly point the bait viewers will advance with great caution and silence by the path cut to the viewing point, whence under cover they will reconnoitre the "tie up." If the calf is not there, it will be considered killed, and the men will not go nearer to further investigate. If its body is lying at the picket, it should be attentively observed to see if it is dead or only sleeping. If necessary to clear this up, a closer approach should be made, but it is better, if it can be avoided, not to advance closer to the tie-up than the viewing point. The object aimed at is by no possible means to chance disturbing the tiger.

If the viewers consider the bait has been killed, they will at once cautiously and silently withdraw by the way they came, and when out of possible sight or hearing of the tiger, make as quickly as they can for camp and report the kill. If the calf has not been killed they will water it and cut a fresh supply of grass sufficient for twenty-four hours (doing the work quietly and talking low), and leave the place to undisturbed quietude till the next morning's visit. Headmen of villages round should be notified of the positions of all baits, and requested to co-operate in maintaining the localities undisturbed, by warning the inhabitants and by keeping their cattle away. To the same end you will do no other kind of shooting within three or four miles of any tie up. The report of a gun in the neighbourhood makes tigers suspicious and puts them on the alert.

It is not sound to allow one party of men to view the baits, and another party to water and feed them later on. Apart from the fact of this entailing two visits instead of one to ground you desire to keep as quiet as possible, other things may happen with disastrous results, as once occurred to me. My orderly had been to view some baits about eight o'clock, had found none of them killed, and returned to me quickly to make his report and go with me after buffalo. We came upon no fresh tracks of these and got back to camp about 12.30, when the first thing I heard was that one of the calves visited by the orderly in the morning had been killed. The men who went to water

and feed the baits, on arriving at one of the pickets, found to their surprise no calf at it. Looking about they discovered the carcase within thirty yards in the jungle. This was between ten and eleven o'clock. The calf had been killed after the orderly's visit—an unusual time for a kill even in the cold weather. The month was February. I at once collected a few men and beat for the tiger. He was not at home. We found he had been lying up in a nullah not far from the kill, but had left it before the beat. The men going to water and feed the calf—having no idea it had been killed—doubtless went up walking carelessly and talking, and thus disturbed the tiger, who moved away and left the vicinity. As the beat had been a very quiet one, I sat up for him in the evening till ten o'clock, and then returned to camp. He never came back to his kill. Little of it was eaten, and, judging by his tracks, he was a very big tiger. Two mornings after, his fresh tracks of the night were found within four or five paces of one of the baits, which he had evidently looked at and declined. This shows how suspicious he had been rendered of a tied up bait by being disturbed by my men soon after killing one. We followed his tracks to the Indrawatti River, which was about half a mile wide there, with plenty of deep water and several islands. In the opinion of the men he had crossed to the other side.

On receiving news of a kill you collect forty to fifty beaters if possible, by sending word to any villages within two or three miles of camp, though the number obtainable may be less than that in out of the way parts. The country on both sides of the great Indrawatti River is inhabited by an aboriginal race called the Mārias. Their villages are often merely little collections of grass and bamboo huts, situated in a forest clearing and containing about a dozen families; though some are larger and more substantial with well made cattle pens, and fences enclosing the cultivated fields. Many of the men may be out at their usual occupations in the forest or fields when word goes round for beaters. If you happen to be camped within reach of some of the larger villages you may easily collect the beaters required.

Supposing you have managed to collect thirty to forty beaters. This number, with seven or eight, say, of your own men, will give you something over forty all told. Besides your herdsman who may be available, there are sure to be a few others of your followers willing to take part in the beat. You assemble all the men to give them their orders. Most of the villagers or aboriginals will know only their own

dialect, but there will always be some amongst the headmen and your own people who will be able to interpret your instructions. Supposing for the particular beat in hand there are twelve stops required—you will select say six of the most intelligent looking villagers, and add six of your own men. You will already have trained your herdsmen and others willing to learn, by occasional practice, to tap a tree with the right amount of strength—particularly two of them whom you design to always act as “machān stops.” These men should be carefully taught to lightly tap with a fairly thick stick, so that the sound only just carries to 150 yards through the jungle. Anything louder than that may cause the tiger to hesitate to go forward or to imagine himself surrounded, with the result of his perhaps breaking back through the beaters, or to a side through the stops. The sound made by the other stops may be a little stronger, carrying to about 200 yards. The tapping should be slow—about one tap in five seconds, something like the time a man takes in leisurely chopping wood. Anything quicker produces an unnecessarily disturbing sound. The great thing is to drive the tiger in the required direction without putting him out very much, so that he comes along slowly, taking his time, and giving you a good shot.

It is very important to train your herdsmen and others of your following willing to take part in beats, as stops. For they are always with you, are probably more intelligent than the average villager, understand you, and will soon know exactly what to do.

Any men of your own available as stops besides the two machān stops, you will distribute amongst the villager stops, with particular instructions to keep them up to their work, and to call out to them if they cease tapping. For though calling out on the flanks of the beat is not desirable, it is better than that the tapping should cease. The machān stops, however, should never speak.

It is of the utmost importance that the tapping of the stops should be continuous from the opening of the beat—that is the commencement of the shouting of the beaters—to the end of it. The ordinary villager, however much you may instruct him previous to the beat, is apt to be apathetic, and getting tired after a time of tapping ceases it for a space, or decides to wait until he actually hears or sees the tiger. This may be fatal to success: for the tiger hearing no sound in a certain direction, perhaps makes in it, and is then suddenly brought up by the sharp tapping, coughing, or shouting of the stop, who has just become aware of his near approach. This *rencontre*

startles and puts the tiger out altogether: he probably begins to roar and dash about, and if he does not break through the beaters or the stops, comes at full gallop past your post, giving you no sort of shot as he races through the trees and cover.* Herein lies the great objection to using "silent" stops—men posted with instructions to make no noise till they see the tiger. As long as the tapping of all the stops is continuous, the tiger knows where the sounds come from, shapes his course accordingly, and comes quietly past your post. I have lost several tigers by using silent stops. A silent stop may through certain difficulties of ground be necessary, but it is then a choice of evils of which he may be the lesser.

The base stops, Nos. 1 (near the river bank), will be instructed to shout like the beaters: all the others will only tap.

Having told off and instructed the stops, and given them a badge (such as a band tied round the arm) so that they can be readily distinguished when you want them, you next instruct the beaters. Your orderlies, peons, forest chaukidars, or intelligent headmen, who will have charge of the beating line, will already have been instructed by you in your system of beating.

The system I ultimately decided on as the result of my experiences, was as follows:—The beaters were divided into three parties, each under an orderly assisted by headmen and others. They assembled silently at the beaters' assembly point under a headman, and waited till the orderlies and other men joined them after posting the stops. They were then silently formed along the beaters' assembly path: the centre party at the assembly point—the right and left parties dividing the distance of the beat limits to either hand. The centre party was the party of direction. When the flank parties had taken up their positions, their commanders reported to the commander of the centre party, who then advanced in the direction of the tie up, his men commencing a moderate shouting and talking. The flank parties took this up and advanced, keeping generally level with the centre party. This was the first breaking of the silence under which it was necessary to carry out all the preliminaries. For if the tiger is disturbed by premature sounds of men in his vicinity, he will perhaps move off, pass through the then silent stop line, and thus escape out of the proposed beat.

* Hicks relates how he once brought a tiger, that was galloping towards his machān, to a dead halt by a sharp blast of his whistle, and thus obtained a successful standing shot.

When the base stops (Nos. 1) heard the advancing beaters, they also shouted moderately, and all the other stops commenced their tapping. The beating line on arrival in the open river-bed was halted in it, and extended until the distance between the base trees was covered.

The base line being generally about 500 yards long, supposing there are thirty beaters, an extension of fifteen or sixteen yards between men would practically cover the whole space. In a fairly open river-bed the commanders of parties can see all their men and extend them properly.

The extended and halted line kept up a moderate shouting and talking for a quarter of an hour by a watch I gave the centre party commander.

This quarter of an hour's halt is a most important part of the programme. It gives a tiger time to collect himself, and make up his mind without being unduly hurried as to his line of retreat. Most tigers will have come quietly past your post before the end of this halt. For by that time nearly half an hour will have elapsed from the first shouts of the beaters on leaving the assembly line. If the tiger has not come up to you by then, he is either a very slow and cautious mover, or intends to lie close and let the beaters pass over him. In the latter case he is a dangerous tiger and likely to kill any man who may come upon him.

So in the further advance of the beaters after their halt in the river-bed, the character of the drive changed. It had hitherto been a quiet beat, giving the tiger plenty of time and not flustering him. But the halt at an end, and no shot having been heard from the machān, the beat became a noisy one, to move on a probably difficult and dangerous tiger. The commander of the centre party fired his rifle, and on this signal the flank commanders also fired,* each party assembled in a compact body behind its commander and advanced into the jungle in the direction of the machān—the centre party on the central or tie-up-machān line, the flank parties at intervals of 100 to 150 yards from it, all making as great a din as possible, shouting, beating drums, sounding horns, etc. Thus each party was closed up headed by a gun if available.

If the tiger is late in putting in an appearance owing to being a very slow and cautious mover, the firing and increase of noise from the beating line will not startle him to the extent it would if such noise

* For these signal shots, orderlies fired into the ground a few paces in front of them.

commenced the beat. For he will have grown accustomed to the fact that men are moving towards him for some time, and though he may hurry his pace he will not be panic-stricken. What causes panic, and therefore a galloping tiger, is the sudden commencement of firing and an infernal din from a complete silence.

If, on the other hand, he is a dangerous, close-lying tiger, the firing and noise will be the only way to possibly make him change his mind and elect to move on. The disadvantage that there will be wide intervals between the compact parties must be accepted as the best way of protecting the men. The tiger, however, will only be aware that a formidable gathering is approaching him, and will hardly be able to think out the matter of the intervals!

Every man of the beaters, especially if they are *Mārias*, will have an axe or a spear.

Well, having instructed everybody, you move off from camp to the scene of action, the stops leading, followed by the beaters; with orderlies and responsible men heading and bringing up the rear of each body to prevent straggling and maintain silence. Arrived at the river-bed you go along it—everyone trying to walk quietly—to the flank of the beat, sending the beaters under an orderly or other selected man by the path to the beaters' assembly, and proceeding yourself to the *machān* by the stop line path with your other men and the stops, sending the stops up their trees as you go. Everything must be done as quietly as possible. There should be no need for any further instructions, all such having been given before leaving camp. If anything has to be said it should be said in a whisper.

In going along the stop-path you should have a rifle in your hand and keep a good look out for the trail of the tiger dragging his kill across it, in case this bad luck has occurred. In fact it is advisable to tell off a man especially for this who will lead the way. If such trail is come on it will be evident the tiger has gone outside the proposed beat, the plans for which will of course be entirely thrown out, and a speculative drive must be arranged, or the trail followed and the tiger "sat up" for. If vultures or crows can be seen over any particular part of the jungle, they will show the position of the kill, and a beat should certainly be arranged, since it will then be no longer speculative. The arranging of a new beat in case the kill has been dragged across the stop path will be discussed further on.

If, however, no trail is found crossing the stop path, it gives good

reason to believe the tiger will be in the already prepared beat, if that has not been previously indicated by birds remaining in trees and circling about within the beat limits, in which case looking for the trail on the stop path will be manifestly unnecessary. But very frequently there are no birds to give any indications, as a tiger will often hide his kill from their view in dense cover.

Arrived at the machān and your position taken thereon, you fix a few fresh cut branches at any part of it considered necessary for cover. But your great protection from catching the tiger's eye before getting your shot will be to stand as still as possible, and bring your rifle to your shoulder slowly without any sudden movement. A tiger rarely looks up unless his eye is caught by some quick movement; and any branches you fix on the machān must not interfere with a clear view all round. Your men will remove the ladder, lay it down thirty or forty yards to the rear, and then proceed on their way by the stop path on the other flank of the beat (looking, if necessary, for a trail across the path), the orderlies posting the stops as they go, and being careful to place your own men according to your instructions. Rejoining the river by this path, they cross it and take the path on the other side leading to the beaters' assembly.

Regarding the time occupied in all this. Supposing you have received news of the kill at eight o'clock; collected beaters and given everyone their instructions by midday; mounted the machān (say two miles from camp) at one—then the beat will commence about 1.30.

I think the standing position the best for shooting from a machān. Some like to fire sitting, considering it steadier by obtaining elbow rests on the knees. In standing, however, you can swing on a moving object more freely, and are ready to fire without delay in any direction. You also obtain a better view and command.

You face towards the beaters, listen for the slightest sound indicating movement in the cover, and keep a sharp look out to both sides from the time your men leave you. Even before the beat has commenced the tiger may have got wind of unusual movements in his vicinity and may suddenly appear without any warning by signs or sounds. I have never known this happen myself, but others have.

Every living thing in the forest seems to be the tiger's enemy in giving notice of his movements. Birds chatter and flutter about excitedly if they see him: peafowl rise with loud cries: monkeys swear and spring about in the trees over him: deer bark. But if none

of these signs prepare you, a rustle in the grass or dead leaves, the snapping of a twig, or some slight sound, will generally precede by a few seconds the appearance of the tiger, even if he is moving very cautiously. This is a supreme moment. Your senses have been on the stretch for some time, your heart perhaps is thumping with nervous anticipation (or whatever term may be applied to your condition), but now you must steady yourself if possible and shoot straight.

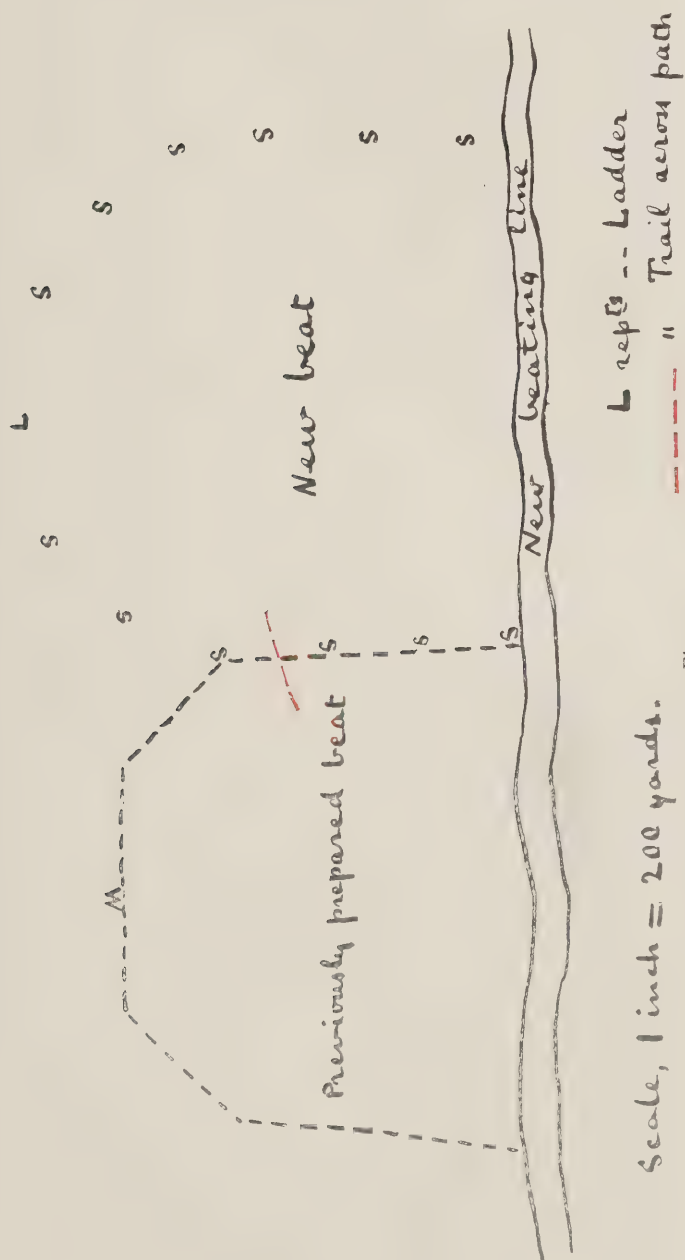
If the tiger gets away wounded you must follow him up as long as the trail can be kept and there is a chance of recovering him: for he may become doubly dangerous to the country side. To follow up a wounded tiger, the beaters will form a compact body headed by yourself and the orderlies—that is, three or four guns as the case may be. The trackers will work under your close protection. If the blood trail shows the tiger is badly hit and may be soon come upon, you will go slow, send men up trees for commanding view, and throw sticks, stones, or anything available, into particularly thick cover before entering it.

Let us now consider the matter touched on in describing the proceedings on the way to the machān—namely, the possibility of having to arrange a new beat if a trail over the stop path shows the tiger has dragged his kill outside the previously prepared beat limits.

If the tiger has done this—say across the right flank stop path—a new beat might be arranged by forming the beating line in the river-bed extended to the right from the right base tree. You could then proceed with the orderlies and stops by the stop path, sending the stops up the blazed trees, till you arrived at the third stop from the machān. Here get the ladder from the machān, strike out a new stop line half right, till you judge you have gone far enough, place the ladder against a suitable tree for your post, and send on the orderlies to make a round back to the right flank of the new beating line in the river-bed, placing the remaining stops as they go. On reaching the beaters the orderlies could commence the beat as illustrated in the sketch.

Other ways of arranging a new beat, while making use of a part of the cut stop path and river-bed for it, will suggest themselves, according to the point at which the kill has been dragged across the path.

The consideration of this matter also shows how useful the stop path of a prepared beat may be, not only in placing the stops quietly



and quickly, but in giving information of the tiger's line if he has dragged his kill across it, and thus indicating how to arrange, then and there, a new beat.

Regarding shooting from a ladder placed against a tree—if the branches are convenient you can often be in a fairly good position for shooting, standing on one of the upper steps; or you may find a comfortable enough seat on a thick branch. You will not of course be able to shoot freely to all sides as on a machān, which under the circumstances there will not be time to make, apart from the risk of the sounds the work entails, however quietly done, disturbing the tiger.

One other point I will mention before leaving this subject. A tiger will sometimes drag his kill further on the second night, though quite undisturbed. That is a reason for always trying to beat the same day wherever a kill is reported. If two or more are reported the same morning, perhaps some miles apart, you should beat at both or all of them if possible that day. I only once deferred a beat till the next day. I had had two kills reported about five miles apart. Circumstances delayed my start and I only did one of the beats. I might have done the other before nightfall if I had hurried matters, and it was a pity I did not. Going next morning to the other beat, we drove it and found it blank. After the beat we discovered the trail where the tiger had dragged his kill across the stop path. If we had seen this (as we ought) before we beat, we could have arranged a new beat, but as we had driven the place and made a disturbance, it was no use thinking about. There were no birds to warn us or indicate the position of the kill. We took up the trail and found the kill about 150 yards outside the stop path, well concealed from the view of birds. Going back on the trail to investigate, we found the tiger had first dragged the kill a little over 200 yards from the tie up, and then made his first meal. The opinion was that he had been there all the previous day, and had only dragged his kill on further (another 250 yards) the second night. If, therefore, we had beaten the day the kill was reported we should very likely have got him. The sketch illustrates the tiger's line. It will be noticed he left the nullah with his kill within a few yards of the tie up. The locality was very remote and quiet, so there was no particular reason for the tiger dragging on his kill the second night except his caprice or restlessness. However, it goes to show that it is sound business to beat if possible the same day wherever a kill is reported.

To return to our ordinary shooting arrangements. When no kills

are reported you spend the days in "tying up" at the other points selected for the purpose, until you have as many baits out and beats prepared as you consider necessary. You are then free on "non-kill" days to engage in some other kind of shooting, but taking care to do so at a sufficient distance from any of the baits. Really, it is best to do no other shooting, as wherever you do it, it will very likely put on the alert some tiger coming towards the neighbourhood from his distant round, who would otherwise have taken a tied up calf in an unsuspicious mood.



K rep^d - Kill.

Scale, 1 inch = 200 yards.

FIG. 5.

A bait, if judiciously placed, will generally be killed within a week, though sometimes not for a fortnight, or even not at all. The calves should be relieved every three or four days, as long as you have a sufficient number. Then it may not be a tiger that kills, but a leopard or wild dogs. If you find the latter about you may as well move on somewhere else. They hunt in small packs, usually of six to twelve, kill your baits, drive away the game, and even the tigers, who dislike their presence and leave a locality where they are.

The baits should be numbered, and notes and rough plans of each beat kept in a pocket-book or entered in your diary.

Bait viewers should be told off so that the same men visit the

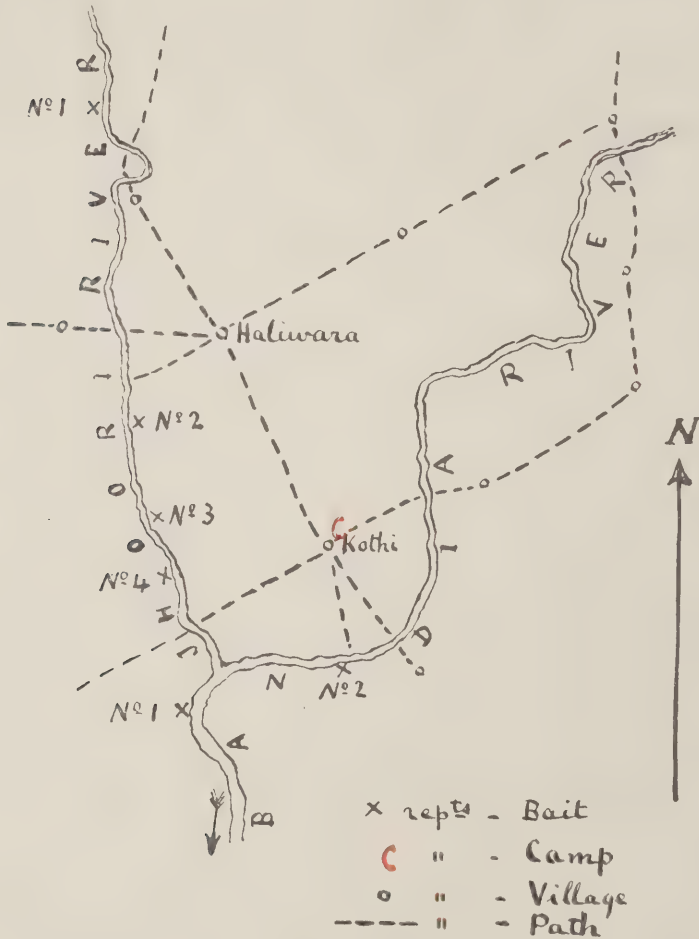


FIG. 6.—Plan of Baits out—February 24th, 1910.

Scale, 1 in. = 2 miles.

same baits. Then when a kill is reported you refer to your notes or diary, see the features of the terrain and number of stops.

Your baits may cover five to ten miles of country, placed on one or more river-beds.

A plan of baits that I once had out (taken from my shooting diary) in a part of the Ahiri Zamindāri kindly allotted me for shooting by Mr. Langhorne, the Manager, Court of Wards, Ahiri, is given as an example of what has actually occurred, and may be expected if the luck is not very good.

The Bāndia is a tributary of the Indrawatti River, running here through the Ahiri Zamindāri of the Chānda District. Its bed above the junction of the Jhoori is about seventy yards wide—below the junction, 120 to 150. The Jhoori is about forty yards wide. The country is forest-covered, and inhabited by the Mārias.

Haliwārā was the only village of any size in the tract of country included in the sketch, and could supply about twenty-five beaters at a sudden call, Kothi about fifteen, and the other villages within reach half a dozen each on the average.

Jhoori baits Nos. 1, 2, and 3 (*see* Plan) were tied up from the camp at Haliwārā. The river-bed between Nos. 1 and 2 (though I found tracks on it) was not quiet enough for “tying up,” there being usually men and cattle about that part of it. I then moved to Kothi, leaving two of my herdsmen at Haliwārā to visit (with villagers in my pay) those baits, and report to me at Kothi in case of a kill. One of the herdsmen and two villagers were detailed to visit No. 1, which was the furthest away—some three miles from the village; and the other man with two villagers to visit Nos. 2 and 3.

My camp at Kothi being over five miles from No. 1, I calculated I should get news of a kill there between nine and ten, and so never left camp before ten.

From Kothi I tied up Bāndia baits Nos. 1 and 2, and Jhoori bait No. 4.

The plan shows the baits out on February 24th.

I had Bāndia baits Nos. 1 and 2 visited by separate parties of men, and Jhoori baits Nos. 3 and 4 by one party. This daily employed nine men—three of my own and six villagers, as bait visitors from Kothi. Jhoori No. 3 being now visited from Kothi, the herdsman previously visiting Nos. 2 and 3 from Haliwārā had only to visit No. 2.

It will be seen that fifteen men (five of my own and ten villagers) were employed to visit six baits. If you have enough men, the more you employ for visiting, up to one party per bait, the quicker you will receive the morning reports. If you are short of men you must tell off some of the parties to visit more than one bait.

After the 24th, I further "tied up" at two points about half a mile apart only, near the bend of the Bāndia to the north of Kothi—numbering the baits Bāndia 3 and 4—which I had visited by one party.

Bāndia bait No. 2 was tied up on February 24th, and killed the same night. The beat was blank, and the tracks showed the kill was the work of a leopard. I tied up again at the same place on March 2nd.

Jhoori bait No. 1 was tied up on February 16th, and killed on the night 25th—26th. The tiger was at home, but, owing to too great an uproar commencing the beat, raced past my post and was missed.

Jhoori No. 2, tied up on February 17th, was killed on the night March 2nd—3rd. Everything went well and I got the tiger.

Bāndia No. 1, tied up on February 21st, was killed on March 3rd—4th. The tiger was in the beat, but taking up his position in thick grass covering broken ground, would not be driven, roared at and threatened the beaters, and got away through them.

Bāndia No. 3, tied up on February 28th, was killed March 6th—7th. The beat was blank. Tracks showed a leopard had killed.

On the 8th I drew in all the baits then out—Jhoori Nos. 3 and 4, Bāndia Nos. 2 and 4—and moved higher up the Bāndia.

Some may consider the system of arranging all the preliminaries, making the machān, blazing the stop trees, cutting paths, etc., at each "tie up," before a kill occurs, as too troublesome, and prefer the usual system of arranging the beat after the kill. This generally involves following up the trail of the tiger from the kill till his "lie up" can be located, and it is evident that it is easy in heavy, extensive jungle to then make mistakes in arranging the beat with not much time to spare. If a particular ravine or strip of cover is judged to hold the tiger, the matter is not so difficult. But in any case there is more risk of disturbing the tiger in arranging the beat after a kill, than if all the preliminaries are previously settled and marked out, and can be consequently carried out quietly and promptly. More especially is this so if the trail has to be followed from the "tie up" to locate the tiger, in order to know where to beat; for this is very likely to end in disturbing him. Unless there are some well-defined features of the ground or cover, you can never know in following up the trail when you may come close on to the kill, and by so

doing in all probability disturb the tiger to the extent of sending him right away.

There is no doubt that, though troublesome and entailing work in preparations for an event that may not come off, still the better and surer way is to tie up at spots where you can fairly judge the probable lie up of the tiger after killing, and to arrange all the beats as much as possible at the time of tying up.



CHAPTER V.

TIGER.

FURTHER METHODS OF SHOOTING.

NEWS may be received of a tiger that is known to have taken up his quarters in a certain piece of cover, and you may determine to beat that cover as soon as possible without tying up. Such news will most likely be brought to you in the hot weather, when tigers are sometimes known by the villagers to be living in evergreen covers near water in a river-bed. Some covers of the kind, it is said, generally hold a tiger during the hot season; when one is killed or vacates, another soon entering into occupation. You reconnoitre the ground from such a distance as will preclude disturbing the tiger, and decide on the general positions of your beating and stop lines. If there seem to be suitable trees on the side you intend to post yourself, you have a ladder prepared; but often in the middle of wide river-beds there are no such trees where you can most advantageously command the point you wish to. Then you will have to place yourself on a rock or big boulder, if handy, such as are frequent in river-beds, or do the best you can.

In the heat of the day, when the tiger will be at home and very likely asleep, you bring up the beaters to their first position, and make a round forward well outside the cover you believe the tiger to be in, posting the stops as you proceed, till you consider you have gone far enough. You then direct a few men to take up commanding points whence they may be able to observe the tiger's line, or mark him down, if he gets past you; and you select your post, and send the remaining stops to be posted by your orderly or other responsible man, round the other side of the cover to that flank of the beating line.

If there are no suitable trees for the stops, they must get on to

rocks, or well away from cover with open ground round them and an easy line of retreat to some tree or point of vantage. Or they may be posted, if armed with spears and axes, in parties of half a dozen, at intervals according to the number of men available.

Dummies, pieces of cloth or paper, etc., may act as stops if placed in very thin cover or on open ground where the tiger would see them before getting close to them. Sir Montague Gerard related that he had used such with success, but acknowledged that they are apt to put a tiger out. He once saw a tiger charge, roaring, a line of flags strung along a part of the stop line, jump it, and get away.

Circumstances may induce you to sit up over a live bait. Where tiger tracks are numerous and at recurring intervals of only a few days, you may have a fancy to try this method. Even if you are shooting on the beating system, you may find tracks showing a tiger frequently promenades at night a certain portion of river-bed, nullah, or path, or drinks at a pool a long way from any other water, where tying up for beating would be no use owing to the proximity of a village, the existence of difficult ground out of which a tiger could not be driven, or other reason. However many tracks there are, you may quite possibly have to sit up four or five nights before a tiger comes, and one may never come at all. I remember in Burma once sitting up for some ten consecutive nights without result, over a calf tied up in a nullah where tracks showed tigers had been in the habit of coming at intervals of a few days up to the time I commenced my night watching. Then they seemed to know, and came no more! The place was too near a village to make tying up for beating any use. I have done the same under similar circumstances on other occasions for several days without any result. However, I should say that if "sitting up" be systematically adopted as a method of tiger-shooting, it would yield better results over a live bait than over a "kill" in the end—one great advantage being that the machān, etc., can be prepared beforehand, and the bait placed on suitable ground for night shooting.

Hicks recommends the use of wooden bells (of the ordinary kind worn by village cattle) with baits when tied up on paths in dense and extensive forests. This would be peculiarly applicable to Burma, where the river and stream beds are often of such a character as not to show tigers' promenades, and where, though occasional tracks may be found at some part of a river or stream, or on a forest path, yet there is nothing to indicate tigers' regular beats.

If a wooden bell is tied on the neck of a bait, the sound, whenever the animal shakes its head or moves about, will carry a long distance

in the night, and may attract a tiger by inducing him to suppose there are some belated cattle wandering in the jungle. For the tiger is probably familiar with the sound of the bell and its meaning.

I have never tried this way, but the idea seems a good one for sitting up over a live bait, but not for attaching to an animal tied up with a view either to sitting up over a kill or to beating, because the bell would continue sounding more or less while the tiger was dragging his kill away, and perhaps even while he was feeding, which might both annoy and alarm him. None of us would like to have a dinner bell not only announcing our meal, but continuing to sound while we were eating it!

To adopt the method of approaching a kill to shoot the tiger thereat the baits should be either tied up with strong double ropes so that the tiger will not drag away the carcass, and placed where they can be commanded from a previously determined spot within close and certain shot, the approach to which can be made quietly—by a path cut through the jungle if necessary: or, if tied up with a single ordinary rope which the tiger will break (involving following up the trail from the tie up), the baits should be placed where the surrounding jungle is fairly open and gives a possibility of seeing the tiger in time, which will be extremely difficult however favourable the character of the cover.

You should visit the baits at earliest dawn, approaching the first one directly there is sufficient light to shoot by, so that if it has not been killed you can go on and reach others before sunrise. For it is only between daybreak and sunrise that you have a chance, as a rule, of surprising a tiger at his kill, especially if it is so strongly tied that he does not drag it away, in which case he will probably leave it at daybreak.

If not finding the tiger at his kill you decide to follow him to his "lie up," you will want good trackers and be very lucky indeed if you can come on the tiger before he is aware of your approach, and even then get any sort of a clear shot. If you wait till the sun is well up before following, in hope of finding him asleep or less alert, the tracking may become impossible.

I have tried the method advised of quiet approach at dawn to a point commanding a tie up, but when I have done so, have never had the luck to find the bait killed. I have also frequently followed up the trail of a kill, or approached a kill in a known position, with the idea of sitting up over it, but never under these circumstances found a tiger at it. I have only once come upon a tiger at his kill, and that by

accident. I was out after sāmbar, accompanied by two or three men, and noticed some crows in trees a few hundred yards away. We made as quiet an approach as we could, but the grass and undergrowth seemed of a peculiarly noisy character to go through, and the thickly strewn dried leaves made quiet progress still more difficult. On getting 100 to 150 yards from the crows, I saw the tiger at that distance, just for a moment, slip over a small open space. I pressed forward to get another view and perhaps a shot, but without success. On going to the crows we found the remains of a sāmbar, only the head and neck with some ribs and the feet were left. The tiger had evidently been lying up close to the kill, but was very much awake to make off so soon. This was between three and four on an afternoon in March.

I tied up for this tiger, or tigress we thought subsequently by the tracks, to sit up in case of a kill. Sufficient men were not obtainable as beaters from the few small villages within reach. Four days afterwards the tigress killed, and was reported by my shikāri (I was so mistaken at that time as to employ a man for tiger-shooting so calling himself) to be on her kill in the early morning. She had dragged it about sixty yards from the tie up. I sat up for her, but she never returned to the kill, of which very little was eaten. Probably she saw the men or was aware of their near presence, when at the kill in the early morning, and was made too suspicious to revisit it.

CHAPTER VI.

TIGER.

SHOOTING EXPERIENCES.

IN the month of April a good many years ago, I was shooting with a friend, who had kindly asked me to join him for a short time. The arrangements were all his (I knew nothing about tiger-shooting in those days), and his shikāris had been out for several weeks obtaining news of tiger and (for a few days before we started) "tying up." The very day of our start we got news; for on arriving at the Pyne Ganga River, eighteen miles from Chānda, whence we had ridden in the early morning, a kill of the previous night was reported about two miles down the river. Our baggage camels came up too late however to allow of our trying for the tiger that day. Camp was pitched under some shady trees near the river, and not far from a village. In the evening we received news of another kill, by another tiger, a few miles up the river. We decided to try first for this tiger, and the next morning rode out to where the shikāris had marked it down in a strip of green cover along the right bank of the river-bed. A little further down there was another strip of the same sort. All the rest of the country for some miles was nothing but thin burnt up looking jungle so that the tiger had nowhere else to go unless it chose to face a long stretch of dried-up country.

The beats had been arranged by the shikāris after the kill had occurred, and there were no machāns or even ladders prepared, so we just had to climb up into suitable trees. I had a man in my tree with me, carrying my second gun. The first beat was a failure. Two tigers were seen to break to one side almost before the beat commenced. Nothing came past our posts. They were tracked into the cover lower down the river, and this time the beaters went round to the lower end of the cover, and beat up the river to drive the tigers back

again. N—— (my companion) was posted close to the river; I, on the side away from it. Three tigers came out this time—a fine tigress and two large cubs (judged by the shikāris to be two years old). The tigress broke to my side, and the cubs kept in the cover along the river towards N——. The tigress (the first of her kind I had ever seen in a wild state) appeared about eighty yards from me, moving very cautiously, and offering a broadside shot. As she sneaked along I fired my right at her, and then the left as she bounded on roaring after the first shot. Immediately on this she turned in my direction, and came bounding and roaring in grand style close past my tree, in fact almost under it, evidently looking for the firer of the shots. The man who had my second gun seemed utterly stupefied, and I could not take it out of his hand and get him to hold my empty rifle (one's position being always somewhat awkward in a tree) before the tigress was nearly a hundred yards away, going at great pace, tail in air, when I fired both barrels at her at distances of 100 to 150 yards, the bullets cutting up lanes of dust alongside, but not touching her. All my shots we found afterwards were misses. Just after firing my last shot I heard N——'s rifle crack. The affair being over for the time, I got down from my tree, and found that N—— had killed one of the cubs (a female). The other had gone back into the cover.

The tigress did not go far, and was marked down into the cover close by the river, a few hundred yards further up, by the look-outs. We posted ourselves and beat her up. She lay very close and jumped up with a roar just in front of the beaters, causing a panic amongst them; but, rallied by the shikāris, they came on again. The tigress roared again, scaring the beaters a second time, and then galloped out straight towards my post. N——, however, dropped her with a bullet through the shoulder before she had gone ten yards out of the cover, so I did not get another chance. It was a pretty shot and she hardly moved after it. The point she broke at was about equidistant—eighty or ninety yards—from N—— and myself, but she was coming straight towards me, while presenting her broadside to N——. After this we went back and beat for the other cub, which came right under N——'s tree, and he killed that also with a single shot (a male). So the whole lot were bagged, three tigers with three shots, by N—— whose left barrel was clean.

The first drive was not well managed. If the jungle had been heavy and continuous the tigers would have escaped. The distance at which shots were obtained shows the open nature of the dried up

forest round the green river covers. The tigress may have been induced to lie so near by after the second beat (in which she was fired at), not only on account of the parched and open nature of the country, but also through solicitude for the young tigers.

A few days after this successful shoot we left camp before day-break to sit over some pools in a rocky ravine about two miles away, where a tiger was in the habit of drinking and rolling in the day-time. On arriving there we found the tiger had killed a buffalo calf that had been tied up the evening before. We sat together in a machān over the kill, which was close to one of the pools, till about eleven, and then descended, determining to sit up again at two o'clock till evening. N——'s head shikāri had told him we ought to sit up the whole day, and, getting leave from him, went away to sit over the kill till we should return at two o'clock. About one, however, the tiger came, and was fired at without effect by the shikāri. As no blood could be found we thought at the time the man must have missed, but N—— and a forest officer, nearly two months afterwards, killed this very tiger, who never changed his ground, and then discovered that the shikāri had hit the tiger in a hind leg. After this I returned to camp, but N—— sat up till the evening, and, strange to say, the tiger came and rolled in the water towards five o'clock, but in a pool not commanded by the machān. So N—— got no shot. We determined to try again in a day or two for this tiger, but circumstances prevented our doing so.

The pools were in a very quiet and secluded place, some way from other water; the ravine was of a character that would have made it difficult to drive the tiger out; and it was the hot season. The conditions consequently pointed to sitting up over the water as giving the best chance of bagging the tiger, especially if a kill could be obtained. The conduct of the tiger in returning to roll in one of the pools before evening had set in, a few hours after being shot at and wounded, and also in holding to his ground, shows how differently tigers behave. Most tigers would certainly leave a locality where they had been shot at and hit, and would at any rate not return in broad daylight the same day, or for many days, near the spot where that had happened to them. In fact, very much less than that, as a rule, prevents a tiger returning—the mere suspicion of man's presence being usually sufficient.

Later on in this same month (having parted from N——) I moved to Dhāba, a large village on the Chānda-Sironcha route, where I got news of some tigers down by the Warda River, six miles away. I

camped closer to the river early the next morning and reconnoitred the cover where the tigers were reported to pass the day. This I found to be a number of small islands covered with high grass in the river-bed. The water was nowhere very deep, so the whole river-bed could be beaten by a line of men. I got together about fifty men from the neighbouring villages, and commenced beating by midday. I posted some look-outs in trees, formed a line across the river, and walked myself along the bank a little way in advance—about a hundred yards as far as I remember—with a second-gun bearer. Three tigers were soon on foot I was afterwards told, but I only saw one of them, which left the river-bed cover and came up the bank behind me. When I became aware of its approach (I think it was a tigress) I stood still and waited till it got level with me on the jungle side about twenty yards off before I fired. It probably never saw me, though it is surprising it did not turn towards me and charge at the shot. It did not acknowledge this in any way beyond breaking from a trot into a gallop, but “spoke” to my second which it received as it galloped off at forty to fifty yards distance. I might have got a third shot if my gun-carrier had been sharp in giving me my second rifle. We followed up for about a mile, finding plenty of blood at first, but it ultimately ceased and we lost all trace of the tiger. We went back to the river and beat the remaining cover on that bank but turned out nothing more. The look-outs I had placed in trees did not manage to mark down any of the tigers that broke during the first beat. So I returned to camp unsuccessful.

The following day we renewed our search for the wounded tiger, but could find no traces of it. I beat the river-bed again and put up another tiger. It was out in the middle of the river at first, but afterwards inclined towards the bank I was on. I ran to meet it, but it turned back and went over to the other side. I might have got a shot at 100 to 150 yards, but I was unsteady from running, and thought it better to try and mark down the tiger and then arrange a beat. This we managed to do, marking it down in a patch of cover on the other side (right bank) of the river. I took up a tolerably good position commanding most of the cover, while the beaters advanced from two directions so as to drive the tiger past me if possible. It broke however out of sight of my post, slipping into the jungle which came at that point down to the river's edge, and going up the right bank. Judging the tiger would lie again in some of the covers along the bank, I collected the beaters and beat steadily up it for half a mile or so, keeping myself forty or fifty yards in advance. The men then

rested a bit and began swimming about, talking and laughing. One wandered into a patch of high grass under the bank fifty yards from me, when a succession of roars made him scuttle out sharp and throw himself into the water, and out sprang the tiger up the bank. Two or three bounds took it into a small nullah which led into the jungle and effectually sheltered it. I had only time to fire a snap shot with my right as the tiger bounded from the grass into the nullah, with no effect so far as could be seen. There was no blood. We had been taken unawares and there was an end of it. I felt too tired and disgusted to work any more for the tiger: we had been at it from 7 a.m. till 2 p.m., and the heat was great, so I gave the order for home.

The tiger I had wounded was found dead a few days afterwards, but the carcase too putrified to allow of the skin being preserved.

Some years after these first experiences with tiger, I was again shooting in Chānda, and arrived one day in May at the village of Seonee, near the junction of the Wein Ganga and Warda rivers. Here I learnt that a tiger had taken up his quarters in the evergreen covers of the wide bed formed by the junction. He had killed several wild pig, and—that very morning—a village buffalo down by the river. As there was a difficulty in getting beaters at once, I ordered them for the morrow, and sat up over the kill till nightfall. There were no trees handy so I sat behind a cover of boughs made thirty yards from the carcass, with three rifles. About four o'clock some crows and a jackal came and ate away till towards evening, when they took themselves off. I hoped the tiger was coming, but he did not, and after waiting till it was too dark to shoot, I left the place and returned to camp. The jackal was very nervous the whole time it was feeding. It would take a few mouthfuls, then run off a few yards and look about it, then back to the kill, and so on. It was rather a business going to and returning from this kill, we having to cross two water channels in the river-bed, one about knee deep, the other nearly waist deep.

The following morning the men I sent to get news of the tiger reported that he had come to the kill during the night, had lain and rolled near it, but had not eaten any more.

By half-past ten fifty-six beaters had assembled, and we started for the river soon afterwards. We had to cross the two channels again. It was burning hot, so I ducked in and swam about, clothes and all. It cooled me, and helped me to stand the great heat. The river-bed (about half a mile wide) was stony and sandy with numerous pools

and water channels—besides the main stream—a good deal covered with cool evergreen bushes, thickest and most continuous in the middle of the bed, which was where, in the opinion of the villagers, the tiger lay up. They were in fact quite ideal quarters for a tiger oppressed by the burning heat of the season and the waterless state of the surrounding country. I formed the line of beaters so as to beat through the thickest parts of the cover, and sent some parties ahead from either flank to act as stops and look-outs. There were no trees suitable for these men, so they had to take up whatever points of vantage they could find. Having made my arrangements, I went forward to select my own position accompanied by six picked men—three carrying my rifles, two my spears,* and one my *chāgal* (water skin): this latter man had also an axe. I took up my position a good half mile in front of the line of beaters in the middle of the bed, where the cover began to thin and open out, on the reverse slope of a sand hillock giving me some shelter and a pretty fair view all round. My men sat down behind me. I explained to them that they should all keep close to me, ready to hand me my rifles and to stand by me with the spears in case of the tiger charging, for experience shows that a tiger will rarely charge home on a party of men maintaining a steady front. They seemed to thoroughly understand this, and I sent word to the beat to commence. The men beat well, and arriving at the part of the cover where it was thickest in the middle of the river-bed, and where we expected the tiger to be, doubled their efforts. They made a good noise and worked well, but had beaten almost through the dense part of the cover, and I had given up hope of the tiger being in it, when suddenly arose a great shouting, and there was the tiger cantering and trotting-along about 120 yards off, making when I first saw him straight away from the beaters. He then turned so as to cross the front of the line of beaters, coming rather towards me. He would, if he had continued in this direction, have passed between me and the beaters. I moved forward a dozen or so paces to take the best chance of a shot I could, and as the tiger passed over some rocks about seventy yards away, giving me a tolerably clear view of him, I fired my right ('577 Express), seeing the greater part of his shoulder above the sights as I pressed the trigger. He dropped to the shot, but not being able to see very clearly if he was really down I fired the left at what I could see of him—then looked round for my second rifle (an eight bore) and found my party had retreated twenty to thirty yards! I ran

* A heavy kind for double-handed use on foot, known as "bear spears."

back to them as they would not come on to me, and, getting the heavy rifle, advanced on the tiger, whom I made out when forty or fifty yards from him, lying on his side with his back towards me. I fired between his shoulders blades—an unnecessary shot, but I was determined to make sure of him. The bullet hit where I wanted it to, but the rifle nearly knocked me over and cut my cheek. Both barrels had gone off almost together (20 drams of powder) owing to the discharge of the right barrel causing the left hammer to fall, I having full cocked both hammers before firing. Going up to the tiger, we found he was rather an old one, the hair being greyish in parts and the stripes a little faded. A fine, strong looking tiger however. My first shot had caught him on the neck, and passed out at the back of it. There is no doubt that shot killed him, and that any further ones were unnecessary. The beaters were soon assembled round, and great was the "bucking." Poles and ropes were brought, the tiger was slung up, and a triumphal procession formed to camp. I cooled myself again in recrossing the water channels and arrived home by two o'clock. The tiger was killed about 12.45. He measured (straight between uprights) 8ft. 10in., and the skin pegged out 10ft. 8in.

Regarding the retreat of my gun-carriers and other men, it shows you should have an orderly or reliable man with you when shooting dangerous game by yourself. If I had not killed the tiger the first shot, he would, on being fired at, have almost certainly charged me, and I should have had only one barrel left to depend on, as the men had taken my other rifles off with them. You cannot, as a rule, trust the ordinary villager even in a large party of six picked men, as in this case, to stand by you.

In February, 1907 my wife and I were camped on the Indrawatti River in the Kootroo Zamindāri of Bastar, when news of a kill arrived at eight o'clock one morning by a messenger from my orderly (named Jaggat Singh) who was "tying up" near Pāswari, some ten miles higher up the river. I decided to move camp to Paindwai, a couple of miles from Pāswari, my wife bringing on the camp, while I proceeded at once to see Jaggat Singh and try for the tiger. I arrived at Pāswari by midday and sent for beaters to the neighbouring villages. The Zamindār of Kootroo's brother, who happened to be there, also went off to get me beaters.

Jaggat Singh's account of the kill was as follows:—He and a village shikāri named Kishtoo, who had attached himself to my following, had arrived at Pāswari the day before, and immediately set out to "tie up," taking three buffalo calves with them. They went

to the nullah (a tributary stream-bed of the Indrawatti) where we had previously tied up, and found numerous tracks of several dates from one to ten days old, of two tigers in their opinion—a tiger and tigress. They struck the nullah by the Paindwai-Pāswari cart track and tied up their first calf temporarily close to the mouth of a branch nullah about a hundred yards above the road,* intending to select the machān tree and look over the ground on their return from tying up the other calves higher up the nullah. They were away two to three hours doing this, and tied up the third calf some two miles above the road, finding numerous tracks up to that point, but none beyond. On their return to the calf near the cart track that they had left temporarily tied up, they found it was killed and left at its picket. This was about 4.30 p.m. They approached within ten yards of the calf before they discovered it had been killed. They at once went back to the village and sent off word to me by a man whom I had engaged to track buffaloes when there before, telling him to be sure to give me the news that night, and sending two other men with him for company. He never turned up at my camp till eight the next morning. Moreover, I sent him off an hour before I started myself, to tell Jaggat Singh I was coming and to collect beaters. When I arrived at Pāswari at midday, he had not come, and did not do so till over an hour after me, having stopped in Koker village on the way to cook his food. There was consequently a delay in getting men to beat, but by three o'clock twenty-one men had been collected. These with four Mārias and a follower of mine, who had accompanied me from camp, made twenty-six men to beat and act as stops. Jaggat Singh had reconnoitred the place where the calf was killed early in the morning from a distance through his glasses, and found the carcass had been dragged away.

The beat had to be conducted as for an unforeseen kill without previous preparation: the only advantage being that the kill had taken place at a selected spot, and we judged (correctly) that it had been dragged up the branch nullah. My plan was to make a round through the jungle and strike the branch nullah from 300 to 400 yards up it: fix on a tree commanding the nullah against which to place the ladder: and then for Jaggat Singh and Kishtoo to go right and left, and place four stops in trees to either side about 200 yards away from

* The road diverged considerably from the branch nullah, and was a very quiet one along which few people or carts passed. A bait (for beating), however, should not—as a rule—be placed within half a mile of a cart track.

the nullah, with instructions to begin lightly chopping at the trees with their axes when they heard the beat approaching. Having posted the stops they were to join the beaters, assembled beyond the further bank of the main nullah, and commence the beat, which was to advance slowly with occasional halts of a few minutes, extended to either side of the branch nullah, the men talking (without shouting) and tapping the trees.

This was all done exactly as planned, and the beat was well managed by Jaggat Singh, assisted by Kishtoo the Zamindar's brother, and a zamindāri chaprāssi.

A little before four o'clock I heard the beat coming on and the stops chopping their trees. I then heard the tiger roar several times. A few minutes afterwards it roared again, not far from my right front, as I faced the beaters, so I knew from what direction to expect it. There was another roar and I saw the tiger coming along at a walk through the grass within forty yards of my post. I had to slew round to my right to fire, which was a little awkward on the ladder, but I made a good shot and dropped the tiger with my right. After a few seconds it gave a grunting moan and made a last struggle, raising itself, and then subsided in the grass. I halloed up Jaggat Singh, and getting a few men with spears and stones together, advanced on the place where I knew the tiger to be, though I could not see it in the grass even from my post in the tree. The men threw stones, and I sent Kishtoo up a tree when within twenty yards of where I judged the tiger to be lying. He saw it and called out it was dead. We handed him up another stone or two which he threw on the tiger, and then we went up. It was a tigress 8ft. 2in. long to end of tail, and 5ft. 5in. to root of tail.

We all felt very happy. The bullet (.577 capped, from H.V. cordite rifle) had entered near the point of the right shoulder and come out a little way behind the left, making a larger hole in exit. The tigress must have turned rather towards me as I fired. She had bitten her own fore leg deeply.

I was told the tigress had first made to the left, but was turned by the noise of the stops, and so came past my post. She had dragged her kill some 200 yards up the branch nullah and lay up in the nullah close to it. But she left the nullah on being disturbed by the beat, and made no use of it as a line of retreat.

We carried her triumphantly to our new camp at Paindwai to show her to my wife, who congratulated me and herself on our first "mutual" tiger kill. We had a pint of champagne at dinner in honour of the event.

A few days later, no more kills having occurred, we recrossed the Indrawatti into the Ahiri Zamindāri of the Chānda District, and camped near a village between the Bāndia and Pirmelli rivers. Only old tiger tracks were found in the Pirmelli bed, but fresher and more numerous ones in the Bāndia. So we tied up on the latter river, and two days after doing so a kill of one of the baits was reported. There was a curious incident in connection with it. I was visiting the baits the morning before the kill occurred, and going up to this one (after of course having viewed it from a distance across the river) found fresh tiger tracks passing within a few yards of the calf and leading on into the nullah at the mouth of which it was tied. Why had the tiger not taken the bait? The tracks on examination seemed quite fresh, and we could only suppose that the tiger must just have come (10.30 a.m.), and hearing us had, in consequence, let the calf alone and entered the nullah. If we were heard, it must have been before we viewed the bait, and therefore when we were at least 200 yards away, as the river bed was some 150 yards wide here. Shortly before we arrived near the viewing point my pony coughed. I do not know in what other way the tiger could have heard us. We fed and watered the calf as quietly as possible and went away.

In visiting the baits my pony should have been left behind a good distance off.

The tiger however killed the calf that day or night. This incident of a tiger deliberately passing by an animal and soon afterwards returning and killing it, is interesting.

On the kill being reported, I collected thirty-three villagers, who, with six of my own followers, made thirty-nine men, for beaters and stops, and left camp about 12.30. I approached the machān with the orderlies and stops by a circuitous route previously fixed upon, while the beaters under a chaprāssi went to a point several hundred yards from the right bank of the river, opposite the scene of the kill, which was at the mouth of a dry nullah joining the left bank. The machān tree was about 350 yards up the nullah, and commanded it. I could see down a fairly straight reach of it for sixty or seventy yards. The nullah here ran almost parallel with the river at some 200 yards from it, but further down bent to the right and joined the river at nearly right angles (*see* Plan). I got on the machān at 1.30. Jaggat Singh then took nine of the stops and posted them in trees on the right side of the beat at an average distance of 200 yards from the nullah, closing three side nullahs with them. Below the mouth of the nullah the water in the river was deep, and—carrying his rifle and

ammunition—he could not conveniently cross from the last stop placed without going too near the scene of the kill. So he came back

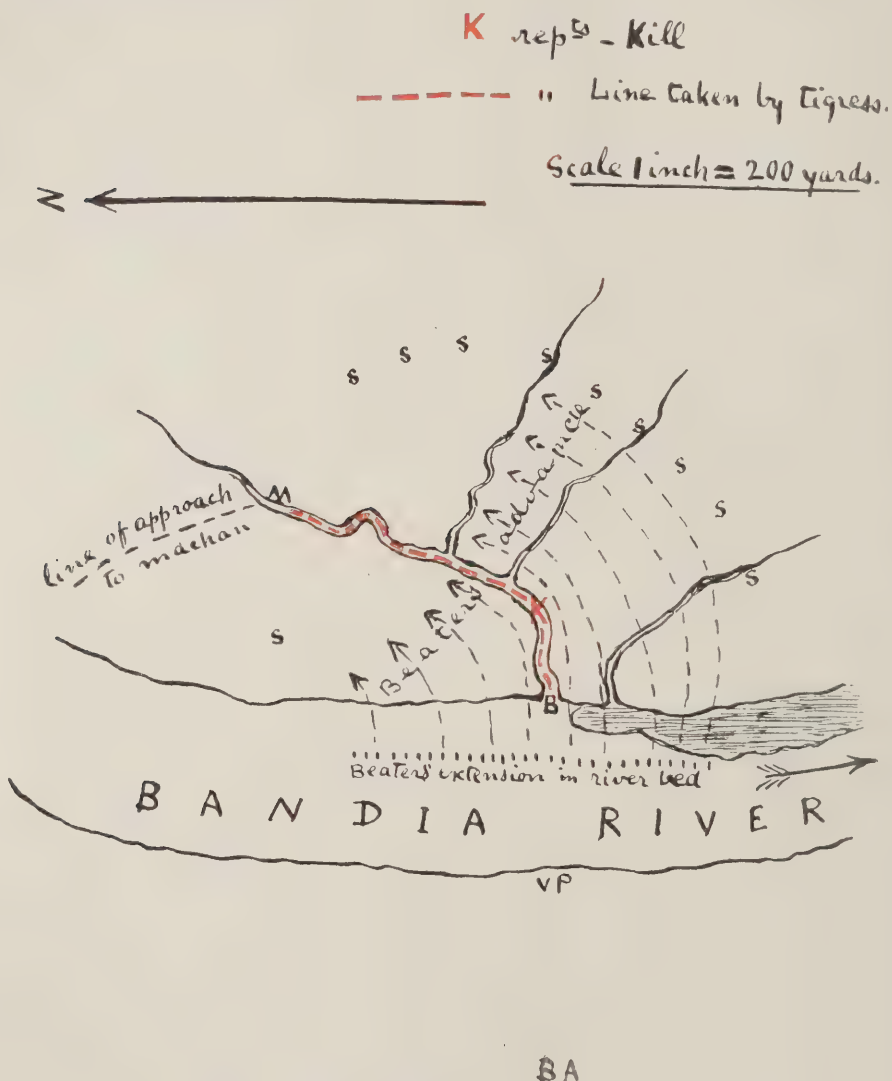


FIG. 7.—Plan of Beat—February 23rd, 1907.

the same way to my tree. He then posted the one remaining stop, and joined the beaters waiting for him at the assembly. The sketch shows why nine stops were required on one side and only one on the

other. The stops nearest the beat had orders to commence chopping and tapping their trees when they heard the beat approaching, and the other stops were to take it up immediately from them one after another, so that on the beat commencing, all the stops would also practically commence work.

It was very hot while waiting on the machān for the beat to begin. The barrels of my rifle would have become too hot to hold if I had not kept them in the shade of a branch.

A little after two o'clock I heard the beat, and at the same time all the stops began chopping and tapping. I heard the tiger grunt twice. It could not be called a "roar" like that of the Pāswari tigress. About 2.15 I saw the tiger come walking along the bottom of the nullah some sixty yards away. The nullah led almost straight to my tree. The tiger came on till it reached some black rocks in the nullah twenty-five yards from me, and then stopped, listening to the beaters, with the head and right shoulder exposed, showing my side of the rock. I dropped the tiger on the spot with my right. What a moment of satisfaction that was, as I stood on my machān looking down on the dead tiger! On the beat coming within hail, I shouted to Jaggat Singh that the tiger was dead. He gave a "hurroush" and they all came on and crowded round it. Jaggat Singh saluted and said "salām," which I replied to with equal pleasure. It turned out, as expected, to be a tigress. She measured 8ft. 4in. to end of tail, and 5ft. 3in. to root of tail, but was less in bulk than the Pāswari tigress. The bullet (capped '577, from H.V. cordite rifle) caught her midway where shoulder and neck join, and as it did not pass out must have traversed the body lengthways. She was half facing me when I fired.

This tigress had dragged her kill a hundred yards up the nullah and lain up in it twenty yards from the carcass. We bore her to camp, where she was displayed to my wife about 3.30 p.m.

I had not been able to look over the ground, to see Jaggat Singh's arrangements with regard to the beat, on account of finding the tigress's quite fresh tracks near the calf. So the arrangements were entirely my orderly's on this occasion. Every stop was placed by him. Considering that there were no stop paths cut, he posted the stops quickly and well. The machān stops were about 150 yards to either hand of the machān. No. 1 stop on the right—that is the stop nearest the base or river line—was about 125 yards from the bank. It would have been as well to have had another stop nearer the bank.

The beaters to the right in their extension in the river-bed went through the water, which required swimming for a few strokes in the deepest part. It was necessary that the line should arrive extended on the left bank.

It was not an easy beat to manage, because as can be seen by the sketch, the beaters, after they had lined the river bank, were obliged to "right shoulders." Such a movement is not to be recommended, as it is likely to miscarry in jungle where at times you cannot see ten yards. That it was successfully done on this occasion shows the beaters acted intelligently and were well directed by Jaggat Singh. He knew nothing about tiger-shooting when we started on this trip, but quickly displayed a great aptitude for the work.

Another way to have arranged the beat would have been to cut a path through the jungle from the left bank of the river at right angles to it, at 300 to 400 yards south of the bait, and extending to that distance into the jungle, on which to form the beating line; and to have beaten northwards to the machān—the stops being posted accordingly. The left flank stop line would then have been either along the left bank or (preferably I think) displayed in the middle of the river-bed—the machān stops being in the same positions as shown on the sketch.

The simplest arrangement, however, would have been to place the machān about where No. 6 stop was posted (fourth from the machān on plan), commanding that side nullah, and posted the stops to both flanks in the usual manner, "stopping" the nullah the tigress came up. The beating line could then have advanced straight forward from the river bank.

Four cubs about a foot long from nose to root of tail, with well marked skins, and claws complete, were taken out of the tigress.



CHAPTER VII.

TIGER.

SHOOTING EXPERIENCES

(continued).

I WILL try to give an account of a tiger that kept on killing tied up baits and holding to the vicinity, though he had been twice wounded in beats, until by chance he placed himself in the area of another beat with which he had nothing to do, and was killed. It is unusual for a tiger if even once enmeshed in the toils of a beat—let alone being fired at and hit in it—consequent on his killing a “tied-up”—animal, to put himself a second time in such an unpleasant position by again lying up near a “tied up” kill.

A plan of my baits out at the time is given so that the events may be easily followed. It will be noticed that the paths leading towards the baits stop short at the right bank of the Dena. There was a good deal of cultivation towards Regri, but on the south side of the river nothing but jungle between Dobda and Arhingi.

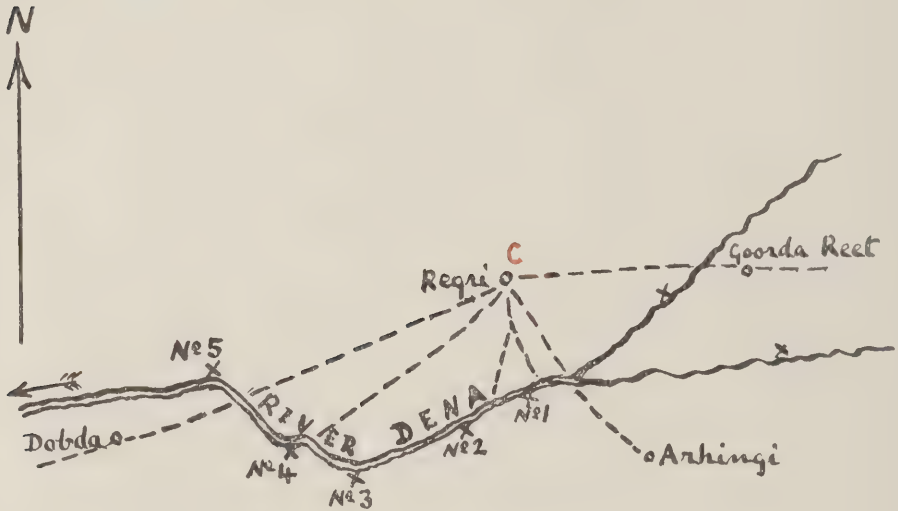
The tiger had killed baits Nos. 5 and 4 on January 17th—18th and 23rd—24th respectively, on both occasions being in the beat and escaping wounded; and fresh baits had been tied up at those pickets.

The beats were instructive in several points. No. 5 had been prepared on January 13th, when I had found tiger tracks of several dates, from one day to a month old, going both up and down the river-bed. I was then camped at Dobda in the Regri Reserve Forest Block, which had been kindly allotted to me by Mr. Donald, the forest officer at Chānda.

As I have no plan of this beat I will briefly describe its arrangement. The bait was tied up where a small, sandy nullah, with good shade and thick cover on each side of it, joined the right bank at a

pool. The machān was made 200 to 250 yards up the nullah, and commanding it. The first stops to either hand of the machān at about eighty yards from it were "silent." The first "tapping" stops were at about 150 yards.

The jungle was rather thick, and unless the tiger came within fifty yards of my post I should not see him. The base stops near the river were 200 to 250 yards to either side of the bait. This beat was therefore smaller than can be recommended as a rule.



"Reet", means — site of a deserted village.

FIG. 8.—Plan of Baits out—February 2nd, 1910.

Scale, 1 in. = 2 miles.

On the kill of No. 5 being reported on the morning of the 18th, I collected thirty-seven men and left camp at eleven o'clock to beat for the tiger.

The beaters had advanced without shouting, according to instructions (but too quickly), nearly up to the machān, when there came a succession of threatening roars from the right part of the line. I told the men near to run back, and in a moment or two saw the tiger coming at full speed towards me. As he raced past the machān

within thirty yards I fired my right at him, and my left when he had got thirty or forty yards further on, going nearly directly away from me. There was no blood to be found and I thought I had missed with both barrels. I supposed also that the reason of the tiger roaring and galloping, was because he had been surprised by the rapid and silent advance of the beaters. I came, however, to another and I believe the correct conclusion after the next beat, namely, that he had come on the silent stop to that side, who had then startled him by suddenly disclosing himself.

We found the tiger had dragged the kill forty yards up the little nullah, then turned up its steep side out of it, and deposited the kill twenty or thirty yards further on in high, thick grass, but with no trees close to it. I tied up another calf at the same place.

On the 24th the kill of No. 4 (tied up on the 17th) was reported. It was nearly three miles from camp which had been moved to Regri the previous day. I collected forty men and started about eleven o'clock to beat.

The orderlies and stops accompanied me by the right flank stop path to the machān—the stops being placed as we proceeded. After passing the machān the orderlies posted the stops along the left flank to the river, which they crossed, and made their way to the beaters through the jungle fifty or sixty yards from the right bank (*see* Plan).

The “stop” references on the plan are—

Sh. S.	represents	- -	Shouting Stop.
T.S.	„	- -	Tapping Stop.
Sil. S.	„	- -	Silent Stop.

It will be noticed the stops were at closer intervals on the left (east) flank line than on the right, the reason being that the jungle, everywhere thick, was still denser on the left side.

I had mounted my machān by midday, and at one o'clock the beat commenced. It was a noisy one from the commencement with shouting and firing.

I believe my orderlies (named Gul Mahomed and Lāl Khān, who were new to the work) got the line to stop more or less for a quarter of an hour, and the tiger had really plenty of time to make up his mind which way he would go. But he was a cautious tiger about getting away. I first heard him roar to my right front (as I faced towards the beaters) not far off, and expected to see him every moment. He was, however, engaged in walking quietly over to the other side. He would have nothing to say to the nullah (which my

machān commanded) as a line of retreat. He crossed it, and about ten minutes after his first roar I suddenly heard him "woof! woof!" to my left front. Then he came galloping towards me from that direction. Appearing about thirty yards from me, he galloped right up to the machān tree without my being able to get my rifle on him through the high grass and jungle. Below the machān he turned sharp to his right, and I fired down on his back as he galloped away. He squirmed to the hit and wheeled round as I fired my left (which must have been a miss), stood for a second, rather back on his haunches, head well raised, and charged back right under the machān,

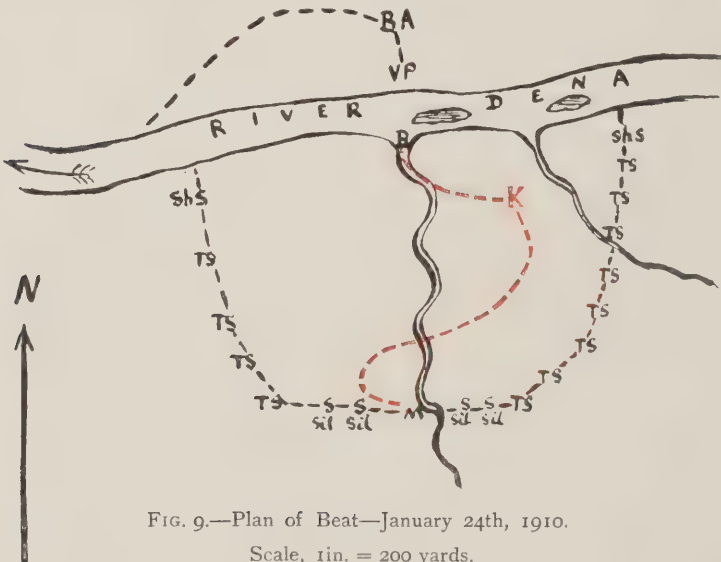


FIG. 9.—Plan of Beat—January 24th, 1910.

Scale, 1 in. = 200 yards.

seeming to spring up at it—evidently hoping to catch his enemy—and on away quickly out of sight in the thick cover. The machān was about fourteen feet from the ground. It should not be less than that. The beaters collected in a mass and came up. I descended and we looked for and found blood. On this I decided to wait an hour before following up, during which time I had my tiffin, and the men a rest and drink by the river. I discovered by inquiring from the "silent" stop who had been posted fifty yards to the left of the machān (left facing the beaters), what had made the tiger suddenly gallop and rampage about. The man said he saw the tiger quietly walking towards his tree. As I should not have seen him if he

continued in this direction, the "stop" quite rightly tapped his tree to turn the tiger towards me. This he did with a vengeance, the tiger being so put out at coming on the stop, that he "woofed" and broke into the gallop that took him up to the machān as already described. I was then sure that what made the tiger on the 18th roar and gallop was suddenly coming upon a stop, up to that time silent, but noisy on seeing the tiger, and I decided never to use silent stops again if I could help it.

We found the kill had been dragged thirty to forty yards up the nullah, then up the steep bank out of it, and on at right angles to the nullah for nearly a hundred yards into the jungle (*see* Plan). It was deposited in high grass. The peg had been drawn out of the ground without breaking the rope, and taken on with the kill. Only one hindquarter was eaten.

After we had waited an hour I commenced following the tiger up. Gul Mahomed and Lāl Khān were to either side of me (making three rifles), two trackers just in front, and all the beaters in a compact body behind—men from among them frequently climbing trees to obtain a view. There was very little blood, except at three places where the tiger in the opinion of the trackers had lain down. After a time blood entirely ceased. The trackers did a really fine piece of work, taking the trail on for two hours, but then having to own themselves unable to carry it further. So we had to give it up and return to camp, which made a second disappointment for me.

The next day we looked again for the tiger, found his night's tracks, and followed them up. This the men did in a wonderful manner over the hard baked ground for nearly a mile, but then lost the tracks and owned themselves completely at fault. I had another calf tied up at the same place (No. 4) where the last was killed.

On February 3rd a kill of No. 5 bait (where we beat on the 18th) was reported. I left camp at eleven o'clock with about fifty men. I used some of my own men as stops. However, to-day there was no tiger in the beat. Afterwards, following up the trail of the kill, I discovered the simple reason—the tiger had dragged it outside the line of stops, to a distance of quite 400 yards from the "tie up." We should of course have seen the trail across the stop path before beating, and I could then have arranged a fresh beat or sat up over the kill. I do not think it any use "sitting up" after beating, as the vicinity has been disturbed. The tiger was our old acquaintance of January 18th and 24th, grown cunning at last through his uncomfortable experiences on those days, otherwise he would not have

taken his kill such a long way in quiet, thick cover, with water handy.

The next morning a kill of No 4 bait (where we beat on the 24th) was reported. We beat at midday, but there was no tiger. We found the kill within a few yards of the spot where the kill had been taken on the 24th. The tiger had made a good meal, the calf being more than half eaten. Again our wily friend, who, having fed well, had cleared off.

I now used to mix my own men with the villager stops, to keep the latter up to the mark, and placed my two most intelligent herdsmen (named Bābu Lāl and Faryād) in the trees nearest the machān to make just the sufficient tapping noise required, which they practised on a tree before leaving camp.

On February 8th the kills of Nos. 1 and 2 baits were reported, which were about three quarters of a mile from each other (*see* Plan of baits out on February 2nd) and were tied up on January 28th and February 2nd respectively. I left camp by eleven with forty-five beaters, and made first for No. 1. The kills being so close, the orders were for a quiet beat with no shouting, so that if the first was blank we could try the second. Approaching the machān by the right flank stop path we came upon the trail of the tiger where he had dragged his kill across the path, and therefore outside the limits of beat. Evidently our cunning friend. So we retreated quietly to proceed to No. 2, with the intention of returning and having a speculative beat for No. 1 if unsuccessful. We approached No. 2 machān by the left stop path, placing the stops on the blazed trees as usual. About 1.30 the beat commenced—a quiet one. Still, the voices of the orderlies and forest chaukidar directing their parties were plainly to be heard, and occasionally the tree tapping and remarks of the beaters. The beating line halted for a quarter of an hour near the bank of the river, during which time all the stops were tapping their trees. There could be no doubt to a tiger in the beat of the presence of men, and there was plenty of time for him to make up his mind as to his line of retreat, and get away. Yet there was no sign of a tiger till the line, after its quarter of an hour halt, had moved on again, and arrived about half way between the river and the machān. I had begun to give up hopes of there being a tiger in the beat, when suddenly there arose a hullabaloo and the threatening roars of the tiger. He had lain low till the beaters were almost on him, and then refused to move for awhile, roaring at them. However, his roars ceased, and in a few moments I saw him come galloping along looking

splendid and large. I waited till he was crossing a small open space forty yards away, rather past the machān, and gave him my right. A palpable hit: he spoke, and a stride further on in long grass spun round once or twice. As he did this I fired my left at what I could see of him, but missed. The next moment he was on again and disappeared. I shouted to Gul Mahomed to collect the beaters and come to the machān. When they arrived we followed up. Bābu Lāl, who was left flank machān stop, called out that the tiger had come close to his tree and he believed had fallen somewhere near. There



FIG. 10.—Plan of Beat—February 8th, 1910.

Scale, 1 in. = about 200 yards.

was a fair blood trail. We went with great caution, the beaters massed behind myself and the orderlies, and men going up trees. Then some of the men in trees said they could see the tiger lying at full length. Sticks and stones were thrown at him, and finally we walked up and found him dead, about a hundred yards from where he had been hit. The bullet had caught him eight or nine inches back from the shoulder, half way up, and come out lower down on the other side. A heavy, thickset tiger. Length to root of tail, 5ft. 9in., length of tail, 3ft. 3in.—total 9ft., measured straight between uprights. The

girth at the smallest part of neck was 2ft. 7½in. He was the tiger I fired at on the 18th and 24th. There were two wounds which could only have been caused by my bullets on those days. Their position made it impossible that both wounds were inflicted on either one of the days. One must have been on the 18th, and one on the 24th. The one on the 18th was a broad graze down the flank (by my left barrel), that on the 24th, a hit behind the hip and coming out in front of it (by my right).

On going to look at the kill afterwards, it was found to be by a leopard, which got away through the right flank stop line—seen by one of the stops. It paid no attention to the tree tapping he said. The roars of the tiger and the shots fired at him had no doubt decided the leopard to break through to a side. The rope of this kill was not broken, and the carcass lay at the picket. The tiger had killed the other calf (No. 1), and, having dragged it well away for his feed, had left it in his usual wary manner (since his experiences of the 18th and 24th), and by absolute chance lain up in the middle of No. 2 beat (*see* Plan).

Well, he had five of my calves. I killed him but I fed him liberally! It is worth while recapitulating his kills. On January 18th, when he "lay up" within the beat limits, was fired at and grazed. On the 24th (a noisy beat with firing signals), when he did the same and was again fired at and wounded. On February 3rd, when (grown cunning) he dragged his kill about a quarter of a mile away and probably did not lie up near it or have more than one feed, as he killed again on the 3rd—4th, and having fed went right away. These two kills (February 2nd—3rd and 3rd—4th), it may be noted, were at the places he had previously killed and been fired at. Then his last kill on the 7th—8th, when he dragged it outside the beat limits, and left it to take his ease more than half a mile off, but, unluckily for himself, in the very middle of the beat where the leopard had killed. The wonder is that this tiger should have remained in the vicinity and continued to kill tied-up animals after his experiences of the 18th and 24th. Tigers differ very much in this way. Take, for instance, the case of the tiger mentioned in a previous chapter, which was carelessly approached after killing by the bait visitors (who supposed the calf alive), and then quietly beaten for (though not in the beat), and which in consequence passed close by a tied-up bait on the night of the following day without touching it, and crossed the Indrawatti to new ground.

Having accounted for the Regri tiger, let us now turn to others.

Later in the same month I was camped at the village of Kothi, near the junction of the Jhoori with the Bāndia River, in the Ahiri Zamindāri, and a kill of one of my baits, over five miles away up the Jhoori, was reported. I collected fifty-seven men altogether (including my own), of which twelve were required for stops. The beat commenced about half past two with signal shots fired by the orderlies, and as much shouting as the beaters and the shouting stops liked. The effect on the tiger was startling. About a minute after the shots were fired I heard a rustling through the jungle more than a hundred yards away to my left front (as I faced the beaters), evidently made by some large animal going fast; and in a moment or two I indistinctly saw the tiger, which suddenly stopped dead (having heard the tapping of the machān stop on that side), turned about towards the beaters, and disappeared from view. Ten seconds afterwards I heard the tiger coming on again, more towards the machān (*see* Plan), and he came into view going at a great pace. He flashed through the trees and grass past my tree at about forty yards. I fired both barrels at him with little hope of hitting, and missed clean. He raced on, "speaking" once. No blood could be found though we followed his trail some way. The orderlies' shots, followed by the loud shouts of the beaters and the stops on either hand towards the river, had alarmed this tiger—a fine looking one—sufficiently to make him go away at once at full speed. He must have been either of an unusually nervous disposition or had some perilous experience impressed on his mind to have become so panic-stricken by the opening noise of the beat. For instance, the beat on January, 24th previously described, was noisy from the commencement with firing and free shouting, but the tiger was slow and cautious in moving off until he was put out by suddenly coming on a "silent" stop. However, no doubt it is not sound to open a beat with a great noise. That can come later, according to the system I have explained as in my opinion the best, when it will do no harm and may do good.

Another noteworthy point concerning this beat (February 26th) was the influence the tapping of the machān stop had on the tiger, even though he was in such an alarmed state. It shows a tiger will not go in the direction of a tapping stop, but, as a rule, avoid him by seventy to a hundred yards.

We found the tiger had dragged his kill forty or fifty yards up the nullah, and then turned out of it on the south side (*see* Plan), taking the carcass on southward for a hundred yards, where he had "cleaned" it: then on for another fifty or sixty (winding about as if

finding a spot to his liking was not easy), and placing it in long grass with not many trees about. One hindquarter and half that side of the calf was eaten. He had gone about a hundred yards away towards the machān to lie up and sleep (in the shade of a tree where the jungle was more open than by the river), nearly I should say on the bait-machān line some 150 yards from the machān. He had put

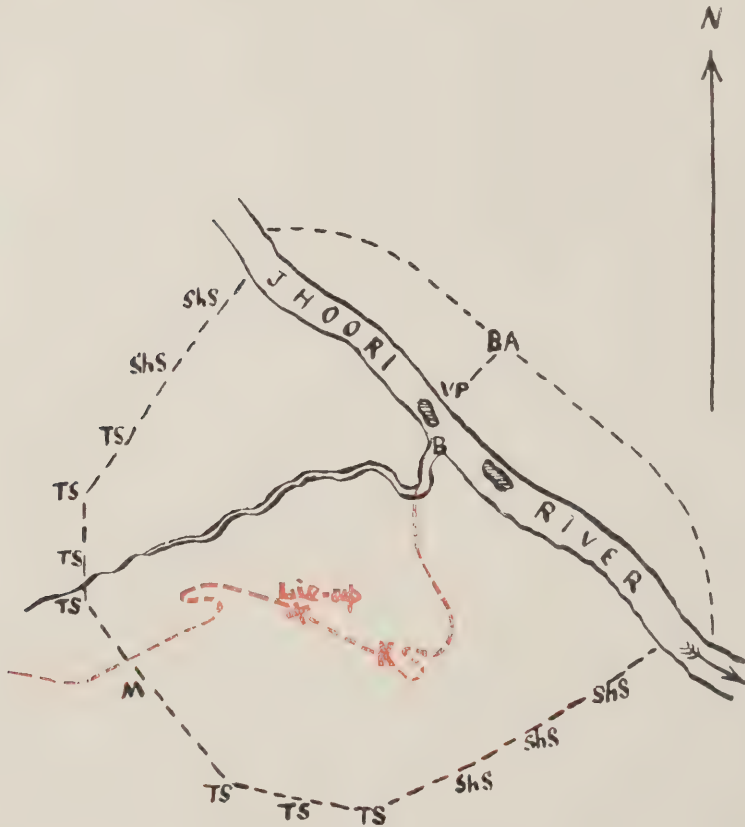


FIG 11.—Plan of Beat—February 26th, 1910.

Scale, 1 in. = 200 yards.

himself nicely about the centre of the beat, and all would probably have gone well but for the shots and sudden uproar with which the beat commenced.

On March 3rd a kill was reported of another bait on the Jhoori River, about two and a half miles from camp in a direct line, but about four by the way I had to go, by the village of Hāliwāra whence

the bait viewers visited the bait, and where I picked up more beaters. Altogether I collected forty-six, which with six of my own men made fifty-two for beaters and stops. The nearest path to the beat from Hāliwāra (that used daily by the bait visitors) struck the river half a mile or so above the "tie up." We went down the river-bed from

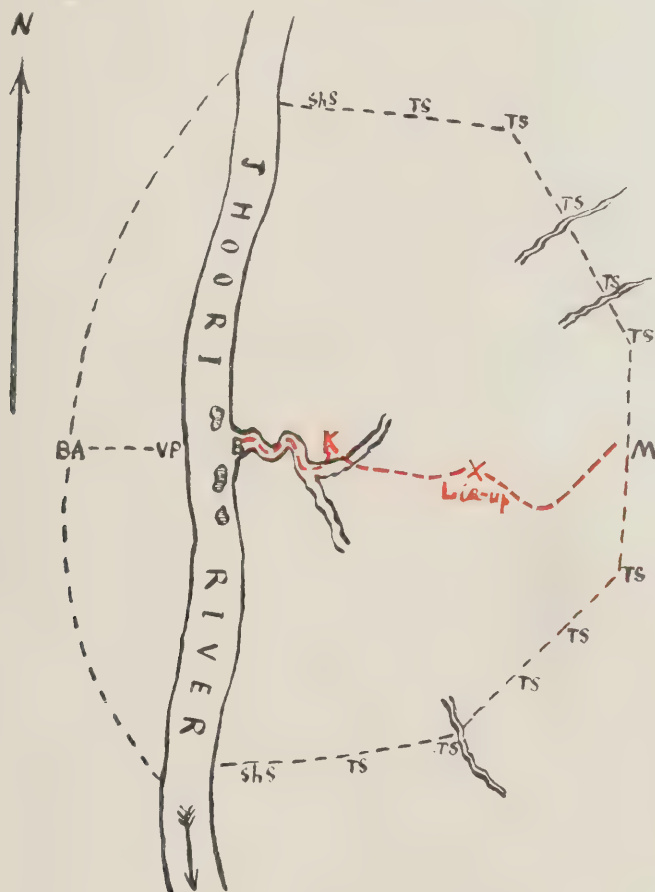


FIG. 12.—Plan of Beat—March 3rd, 1910.

Scale, 1 in. = 200 yards.

there, and I proceeded to the machān with the orderlies and stops by the left flank stop path (the stops being sent up their trees as we went), the beaters going to their assembly point on the opposite (right) bank by the path cut through the jungle for that purpose, and for the daily bait viewers (*see Plan*).

I mounted the machān at 1.20. The orderlies returned to the river-bed by the right flank stop path, placing the remaining stops, and joined the beaters by the path cut to their assembly point from that side.

The beat commenced at 1.50. There was no firing in the beating line this time. All the stops were "tappers" except the base ones (nearest the river bank), and these were instructed to shout like the beaters at a low pitch. The beaters advanced in three parties, the centre (the directing) under Gul Mahomed, the right under Lāl Khān, and the left under one of my followers named Rāma. Their first extension was on the path cut to either side of the assembly point.

The line was to be halted a quarter of an hour on reaching the left (east) bank of the river, and was then to beat up to the machān.

Less than five minutes after the commencement of the beat I heard a rustling, denoting the quiet approach of the tiger through the jungle from my left front—as I faced the beaters. The cover was thick and I did not see him till he emerged about twenty yards in front of me, walking quietly with a heavy, sleepy look. As I raised my rifle he stood listening to the beaters; and therefore gave me a perfect shot. He staggered and jumped about to the shot, but without "speaking" (I saw the red hole behind his shoulder), and then came rolling along nearly under the machān. I did not manage to get my rifle on to use my left until he had passed under and beyond the machān, when I fired a snap shot at him as he disappeared in cover close by, which was pretty thick all round. This I felt was a miss. I shouted to the men to collect and come on. When they arrived we followed up, the beaters massed behind the orderlies and myself—three guns. The blood trail was easy to follow, and we came on the tiger dead within forty yards of the machān. Great joy! The bullet had hit nicely just behind the shoulder, and, as the tiger was quarter facing me at the time, had passed transversely through him, coming out further back and lower on the other side. He measured (straight between uprights) 6ft. to root of tail, and tail 3ft. 3in.—total, 9ft. 3in.: girth of neck at smallest part, 2ft. 6in.: smallest girth behind shoulder, 4ft. 2in. A big, heavy tiger, in fat condition.

We found he had dragged his kill about seventy yards up the nullah, and then out of it to the north side for ten yards (*see Plan*), where in high grass under a tree he had cleaned the carcass and made

a good feed, the whole hinder part being eaten up to the chest cavity. He had recrossed the nullah and made his way E.S.E. for 150 yards or so, when he had lain up in rather thin jungle, and was no doubt resting or sleeping there when the beat commenced. Following his tracks (which the men did in a wonderful manner on the dry ground) we found he had continued about E.S.E. a little way, when, hearing the right machān stop, he had turned north-east and come nicely up to the machān, and stood there. Excellent—a thoroughly orthodox tiger!

He was tied on a ladder framework and carried home via Hāliwāra in great state to the sound of drums and horns. At Hāliwāra the women turned out and threw rice at me: then they joined arms in two lines and danced as the tiger came into view. Men danced round also, flourishing branches and bunches of peacock's feathers. One man carried a big wooden sword. The drumming, blowing, and shouting, were deafening. The same scene was enacted at Kothi; and at each place I had to distribute bakshish to the women. I gave the beaters double pay—eight annas a man. The tiger was not brought to camp till 5 p.m. The skinning was commenced as soon as possible, but was not finished till eight o'clock, by lantern light. I then had the skin pegged out, which was not completed till 10.30. The measurements then were—to root of tail, 7ft. 6in.; tail, 3ft. 4½in.; total, 10ft. 10½in.

What a depressed state I had been in since missing the tiger on the 26th. Now all my grief was dispelled, and I looked forward to getting another tiger in a few days!

The very next morning a kill of one of my baits on the Bāndia was reported. I arrived at the machān at 12.50, and the beat commenced at 1.20. The line halted as usual for a quarter of an hour on the beat side of the river, and then resumed its advance. After some time I heard the tiger roaring, and the redoubled shouting of the beaters. The shouting continued, varied by occasional silences, for a long time; and then voices in consultation. Evidently something had gone wrong. I concluded the tiger had refused to be driven and had broken back or through the stop line. Ultimately—about 2.45—the beaters came up to the machān, and the Kothi headman said the tiger had threatened them and refused to move. Rāma, whose party (the left) came on the tiger, said he lay quite close in the long grass (where we afterwards found he had dragged his kill) and gave no sign till the beaters were almost upon him, when he showed himself, threatening and roaring at them. The men all went up trees except Rāma, who

was an old man and did not feel equal to that, and was therefore left in a perilous position by himself. In spite of the shouting the tiger stood his ground for some time, and the men absolutely refused to beat through the long grass there. After a considerable delay they came down from their trees and proceeded in a body to the machān, avoiding the ground where the tiger had showed. Where he went we did not discover. On descending from the machān I collected all the men, worked through the long grass where the tiger had been, and found the kill. This was at about 200 yards from the "tie up." The hind-quarters of the calf were eaten and the carcass "cleaned" at the same spot. We took up the tracks from the kill for a short way towards the river, when they were lost on the hard ground. The tiger had probably made off in that direction on Rāma's party leaving the way clear for him. If we had come upon him in the high grass it would have been almost impossible to see him or get a shot unless he charged, and then at such close quarters he would probably have "got in." None of the stops would own to having seen the tiger, except one of my own men, who was sixth left flank stop. He said he saw the tiger, which turned from the sound of his tapping and went in the direction of the machān, but I think he imagined it. The difference in the behaviour of this tiger and that of the previous day goes to show that when a tiger has not appeared after the beaters' halt on the base line, perhaps nearly half an hour from the commencement of the beat, there are probably some exceptional circumstances rendering it necessary that the drive should then become a noisy one. As, for instance, the circumstances of this day's beat, when the tiger took up his position on broken ground covered with thick grass, and refused to be driven. If the advance of the beaters from the river line after their halt had been noisy, with firing, etc., he would perhaps have moved on. As it was, when the beating line found that the tiger could not be driven, they should have maintained their position and sent some men to go round to the machān to inform me of the situation, while other men should have climbed trees round about the cover the tiger was in, to keep him there if possible by shouting if he emerged, until I arrived. But my orderlies and Rāma were inexperienced, and no doubt the situation was difficult. Well, if I had an orthodox tiger the day before, I had an unorthodox one this time!

A few days afterwards, on another kill occurring (which turned out to be by a leopard which left the kill at the picket and did not lie up within the beat limits), when I sent to the village for

men, they at first declined to come out. The tiger on the 4th had evidently put fear into them. I wrote in my diary concerning this as follows:—

“The people here are Mārias, belonging to the great Māria tribe inhabiting Bastar. I should not have thought an aboriginal jungle people like this would have been so easily frightened by a tiger. When they beat they are all armed with spears or axes. In fact they never go into the jungle at any time without one or other of these weapons. The Mārias in Bastar are, I see by the *Pioneer*, at present in revolt against the Rājāh of that State, and have invested the capital (Jagdalpur) in considerable numbers—some thousands. Jagdalpur is in the eastern part of the State, about 130 miles, as the crow flies, from here. The north-western boundary of Bastar is only about twenty-five miles away. Two companies of the 22nd Punjābis with a machine gun, and some police, are marching to the Rājāh’s assistance.

“In addition to spears and axes, the Mārias have bows and arrows. I have met parties of them so armed on their hunting excursions, when shooting in Bastar, though I have not seen them in Ahiri. The men generally shave their heads with the exception of a top knot. The hair of those who do not shave is thick and plentiful on their heads, but grows poorly on the face, usually amounting to some thin scattered hair on the chin and upper lip. They wear only a waistcloth, and—on full-dress occasions—a turban.”

When I left Kothi I moved to a small village called Karga, ten or eleven miles higher up the Bāndia, a mile and a half from the left (east) bank. Among the baits I tied up from there was one on a nullah that joined a tributary dry stream-bed of the river. The arrangement of the beat and other matters connected with it, were therefore a little different and more difficult than when arranged on a river-bed which afforded a wide open base line; allowed the bait to be clearly and conveniently viewed from a distance, and made it almost certain that the kill would be taken into the jungle on the desired side of the river. The arrangements will therefore be entered into here, and the beat which ensued on a kill be described.

The stream-bed mentioned ran east and west, and joined the Bāndia River from the east. I will call it for convenient reference—the East Nullah. About a quarter of a mile up the nullah from its junction with the river, the Karga-Māneewāra road crossed it, Karga being about two miles to the south, and Māneewāra a mile north of the nullah. Near the crossing we found the previous day’s tracks of a

tiger, but indistinct. A further quarter of a mile or more up, a small branch nullah joined in from the south-east. The men said it came from Irpanar (*see* Plan of beat March 21st), and that there was water at intervals in it all the way up, but none in the East Nullah. So I examined it, and about 130 yards from its junction found tracks three or four days old, at a small pool. I went on for half a mile or so further up it, finding pools at intervals, but came upon no more tracks. So I "tied up" at the pool where we had seen tracks. This branch

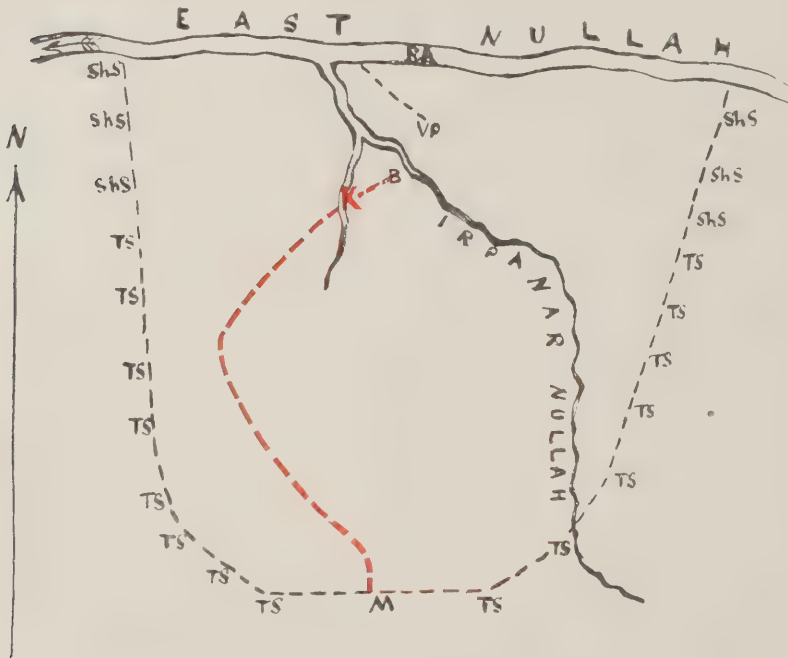


FIG. 13.—Plan of Beat—March 21st, 1910.

Scale, 1 in. = 200 yards.

nullah was only four or five paces wide, with pretty thick jungle on both sides, and therefore no certain indication to which side the kill might be dragged. The bait was tied up a yard or so from the left bank on the very edge of the cover, in order that the tiger might be induced to take it into the jungle on that side. Moreover, the villagers with me were of opinion the tiger's usual day haunt was in that direction towards the river. We thought by the size of the tracks it was a tigress, but it turned out to be a young tiger.

I selected a tree fifty yards to the north of the bait for viewing from

and cut away branches intercepting the view of a man climbing a little way up the tree. From the tree a path was made to the East Nullah for quiet approach from that direction. The beaters' assembly was fixed a hundred yards up the East Nullah from the junction of the Irpanar nullah. The bait-viewers proceeded from camp by the Māneewāra road, and then up the East Nullah to the path cut to the viewing tree (*see* Plan). In case of a kill we were to go by this road and up the East Nullah, I going by the right flank stop path to the machān with the orderlies and stops, and the beaters going on up the nullah to their assembly point.

The kill was reported on March 21st, and I beat between one and two o'clock. From my machān I could make out the position of the kill by circling vultures, and was glad to see it was well within the beat. The beaters first extended right and left from their assembly point along the nullah, covering the distance between the base stops, and shouted at a low pitch for a quarter of an hour, the shouting stops doing likewise, and the other stops tapping their trees. Then Gul Mahomed and Lāl Khān fired their rifles, and the beat advanced in three collected parties, the centre—on the bait-machān line—directing.

The tiger did not hurry himself. There had been the quarter of an hour's halt, then the first fire of the rifles and the advance with increased shouting, followed by the second fire of the rifles. About five minutes after that, when I had begun to think it unlikely the tiger was in the beat, I heard a rustling to my left front, and then saw the tiger indistinctly through the jungle, coming very slowly and cautiously along. At twenty yards from my tree he stood, showing his head and shoulders, nearly facing me, the rest of him covered by grass. I fired at his chest and he fell back with a somersault into the grass, rolling about. I then fired my left, on which he made off straight back towards the beaters and disappeared. He had not "spoken." I shouted to Gul Mahomed and Lāl Khān to clear the front and advance collected by the stop paths to the machān. This they did, and we then followed up, finding very little blood, and came on the tiger within fifty yards. He was seven or eight paces from us when we saw him, and moved slightly, so I gave him a finisher and we went up. Only the first of my bullets fired from the machān had hit, taking him fairly in the chest, and coming out in the lower part of the abdomen. A young tiger 7ft. 3in. He could not have been long getting his own living. I had employed Lāl Khān to view the bait (carrying his gun) owing to it being in a rather difficult

position, necessitating a close approach through jungle, so I gave him the skin.

It is noteworthy that although the beat, after the quarter of an hour's moderate shouting in the East Nullah, became noisy with firing and loud shouting, yet the young tiger moved very cautiously and slowly to the last.

He had dragged his kill a hundred yards into a small nullah, and taken a line when driven as shown on the plan. The sixth right flank stop (counting from the base) had seen him.

Another of my baits that was killed about this time was tied up in a nullah some 300 yards from a low rocky hill (inside the beat limits) with several caves on it. As it was likely that the tiger would lie low amongst the rocks or caves of the hill, I gave Gul Mahomed instructions that if, after beating up to the foot of it and firing rifles, shouting, etc., for a further quarter of an hour, no shot by me was heard, it was to be considered that the tiger was lying close, that the beaters were to be assembled near the hill (but the stops remaining in their trees), and that I should be sent for. Very early in the drive two peacocks came running past me: I heard their progress over the dry leaves that then littered the ground a minute or two before seeing them, and thought it was perhaps the tiger; but there was no such luck. A little later on another flew past. There was no sign of the tiger, and I heard the men beat up to the hill. After half an hour there, some of them came for me. We all went on to the highest rocks and looked about. There was rather a fine view from this point over the forest-covered country northward to a range of hills perhaps fifteen miles distant. The forest had what at home would be called an autumnal appearance, many of the trees bare of leaves, and most of those having them being in the "sere and yellow" stage. This is always so in the dry season in India. The first rains in April and May change the whole aspect like magic. A forest fire was raging seven or eight miles to the north, though nothing but smoke could be seen.

Two caves were shown me, and I intended to pile grass at their mouths and fire it, when suddenly there was an outcry and the "woof! woof!" of the tiger, who, not able to stand the continued presence of so many men in his vicinity, had emerged from his hiding amongst some rocks and was galloping in great style along the slope of the hill on its northern side. The range was about seventy yards, and he received all our fire—Gul Mahomed and Lâl Khân firing at him after I had—but went away apparently untouched. We followed up to

look for blood. The stops had remained in their trees by my express orders, and one of them was soon heard shouting that the tiger had passed his way. We went on there, the tracks being impossible to follow on the stony ground round the hill, and there being no blood to be seen. The stop showed us where the tiger had gone, and then we found blood. We also found that the blood was from a wound on the left side. The tiger in going past us had presented his right side. So a bullet must either have gone through him or grazed over his back to the left of the spine. He was on a lower level than ourselves when fired at. We followed up nearly to the river, by which time it was getting dusk and all the men were much in need of a drink. The blood trail had been very slight and had now ceased. If there had been time before dark I should have arranged a drive along the river, but it was too late.

When we were ascending the low hill to look amongst the rocks and caves, we must have passed very close to where the tiger lay in hiding. I warned the men at the time to collect in a body and follow the orderlies and myself, but as well as I remember some of them were a good deal scattered as we made our way over the rather difficult ground. If the tiger had been by chance then started by men coming right on him, somebody would probably have been killed. If investigating broken ground where a tiger may be concealed, the greatest care should be taken to keep in as compact a body as possible, headed by the guns. Another lesson to be learnt from the day's experience is that, as a rule, it is no use arranging a beat inside which there are rocks, caves, and other strongholds for tigers. I ought to have "sat up" over the live bait, tied up with doubled or trebled ropes. By placing the calf on the sandy bed of the nullah I could have seen it fairly well, as the nights were not cloudy, and anything dark shows up on light coloured sand or ground under starlight. The frequency of the tiger's tracks in that part of the nullah gave promise I should probably not have to sit up more than a few nights. As to sleep, one can get a good deal of sleep in a comfortable camp chair on a machān, and, if asleep at the time, the noise made by a tiger killing the bait should wake one up.

The next morning the kill of a bait tied up on the opposite bank of the river to where we had followed the wounded tiger, was reported. The beat was blank. The kill had not been taken twenty yards up the branch nullah at the mouth of which it had been tied. The peg was drawn and taken with the unbroken rope. The tiger having made his meal had cleared right away. It was the wounded tiger. After

the beat we went to the place to which we had tracked him the previous day, and the men carried on the tracks and trail through the grass in a wonderful manner down to the river a little above the bait. The tiger had lain in a pool under the bank here, and his tracks then crossed the river, entering the jungle near the bait.

Well, the tiger did not seem much the worse for his wound, and scored by securing another meal at my expense, besides giving me the trouble and further expense of a blank drive. A bullet could not have gone through him: probably one grazed his back—as we were firing from above him—and the blood trickled down his left side.



CHAPTER VIII.

LEOPARD.

Hindustāni - - - - Cheeta, Tendua.

I HAVE only shot one leopard in my life, not having tried much for them, but nevertheless wish to write a short chapter concerning this feline.

The leopard is interesting if only on account of its astonishing audacity—an audacity that is calculating, and not foolhardy. The first time I ever saw one in its wild state I was shooting with two friends many years ago. We were walking through some fields in the early morning and saw an animal making off across an interval between standing crops. In five seconds it had entered the further crop. Though one of my companions had shot leopards, and therefore had experience of them, none of us knew at the moment what kind of beast we had just seen. It seemed at the distance (about a hundred yards), in the mist of the early morning, to be of a nondescript colour, and moved with a “lolloping” gait and cant up of its hindquarters. We were inclined to believe it was a big monkey. The tracks showed it to be a leopard. We did not see it again though we beat the fields in the vicinity. There were some intricate ravines along the Jumna river a couple of miles away, from which it had doubtless ventured thus far into the open country during the night.

One day when camped in Jashpur—a Native State in the Central Provinces—some men brought in a fine leopard (a male) that had been shot the previous night when returning to the carcass of a bullock it had killed. The man who shot it said he sat up over the kill with a light shining thereon from an oil wick placed inside a gharrah (small earthenware water pot) with a hole in its side. The leopard returned to the kill after midnight, and the man made a good shot with a charge of slugs, hitting it in the head and neck. I measured it (straight between

uprights) 4ft. 7in. from nose to root of tail, and 2ft. 9in. tail—total, 7ft. 4ft.* There are many instances of leopards returning to their kills with a light shining on them.

A well known officer at Simla was taking a walk before breakfast one morning with a favourite fox-terrier, on a road passing through a wood not far from his house, when a leopard suddenly sprang on to the road from the hill side above, picked up the dog, which was only a few yards in front of its master, and bounded straight on with it down the slope—all in a flash.

A sergeant living in the barracks at the hill sanitorium of Dalhousie, had his dog taken out of his room by a leopard which entered in broad day through a window; and there are many other incidents of a like nature on record.

A rather remarkable case is related by Sir Edward Durand in "*Rifle, Rod, and Spear in the East.*" He was sleeping in the open, a hundred yards from camp one hot-weather night, when a pet terrier was actually taken off his bed. The only notice he had was "a sudden weight on the bed, and a yelp." The leopard got clear away with its prey.

On one occasion in Kulu I had left camp to look for bear and had proceeded but a short distance through the forest when I suddenly came on a leopard lying on a rock, not ten yards from me. We were walking very quietly along the path. I had not a rifle in my hand at the time, and the leopard disappeared in an instant. I sat up over a kid several afternoons till nightfall without success. One evening on returning home I found that while I had been "sitting up" in one direction, my wife, who had taken a stroll a short way from camp in another, had seen the leopard at dangerously close quarters. The rencontre is thus described by her:—

"We were camped up the Manāli Nullah, at, I think, over 10,000 feet. I always knew the height of our camps by the trees and flowers that grew there. A leopard used to come and prowl about the camp at night, and my husband tied up a little white goat for him a quarter of a mile away. He went out one afternoon to sit over it, hoping to catch the leopard, for he had always come to that end of the camp. It was a very cold afternoon and I took my two dogs—Pop and Fizz—and went off with them about half a mile from camp, in exactly the opposite direction from where my husband was sitting over the goat. I used to warm myself by breaking up an old fallen tree with my Khud stick,

* Sanderson states his largest "panther" to have been 7ft. 2in.

and Pop loved to help, catching hold of the end of a loosened bit and hauling away at it with all his might. It was just getting dark, and I was thinking of returning to camp, when I saw a leopard come out of the forest like a ghost, without a sound. He came gliding out close to me, and like a flash of lightning the two dogs made for camp. It was not till I saw them tearing away in the dusk without a bark or a whine that I realised what it really was. The beast made a sort of sweeping curve, coming within three feet of me, and turned back again noiselessly into the jungle. Often afterwards when I thought of it, and how easily he might have made his supper off me, I have felt a thrill of terror. I did not feel that at the time, but I knew if he came for me there was absolutely no help. We were far too far away for any one to hear us, and I knew I could do nothing, and running was no use for me. It was curious how free from terror I was. I have often been far more afraid of a cow in an English field. I suppose it was that I knew no help was possible, and if the leopard sprang on me, well, that would be the end and nothing could save me. I could not move for two or three minutes. I never went so far away from camp again alone at sunset."

During a trip my wife and I took in the Central Provinces, a leopard one night killed a goat picketed with others for the night in the middle of camp, with men sleeping round, and fires alight. The struggle with the goat wakened somebody, who gave the alarm, and there was immediately a great hullabaloo, which caused the leopard to leave the goat dead at its picket and make off. This occurred about eleven o'clock. An hour afterwards, when everyone was asleep again, the leopard returned and took away the goat from their midst without waking a soul. My wife heard something bump against our tent ropes and spoke to me, but I was asleep at the time, and as I remained so she did not try any further to wake me. I do not often sleep so soundly. It was no doubt the leopard carrying off its kill. In the morning we took up the trail. It went close past our tent and some three quarters of a mile into high, thick grass. We came upon the paunch and bits of flesh in this, but could not carry on the trail any further. I sat up the two following nights over two goats picketed together near our tent. The leopard did not return to the scene of its success, wherein it showed its judgment. It knew when to be bold and when to be prudent.

While on the same trip a leopard took a calf at night from the middle of a village near which we were camped. On this being reported to me in the morning I tracked it up and found the kill in

some jungle within 500 yards of the village and 300 from camp. The calf had been seized by the throat. Parts of the hindquarters were eaten and the abdomen ripped open. I had a native bedstead fixed in a low tree and got on it about four o'clock. The vultures, which had been kept away till then, now swarmed on to the carcass, and soon left nothing but bones. They were, however, evidently nervous, and would occasionally stop eating, some scurrying or flying off in a panic. After I had been watching an hour or more they all left the kill and did not return. It was still broad daylight. In a few minutes I saw the leopard's spotted hide showing through the jungle. The cover was very dense, and the mass of branches on all sides of me prevented any clear view for shooting except directly on to the kill, round which a small space had been partly cleared. If the leopard had come right up to the kill I should have obtained a shot, but it did not, probably because there was nothing much left to eat on the bones, and also because the fact of a little space having been more or less cleared round the kill made it suspicious. It would have been better to have dragged the carcass to a more open place, as it is said a leopard will always scent up the drag of its kill. When I next saw the leopard it appeared close under the machān, and stood there in such a position that on account of the leafy branches round me I could obtain no shot without making a noise in getting my rifle on to it. I thought it better to wait in hope of it ultimately going to the kill, or perhaps moving where I could shoot it. But having stood a few seconds it glided on into cover to my rear, and I never saw it again.

The first thing to look to in arranging a machān is that there is view all round for shooting.

When I was at Maymyo, in Burma, a few years ago, there were numerous leopards about that used often to come into the station (which was almost surrounded by jungle) at night, entering compounds and gardens of the houses, and killing cattle, goats, dogs, and even fowls. Many a sportsman was deluded into "sitting up" in his own or somebody else's garden, on the chance of killing one, of the depredators; but, during the year I was there not one was so killed. The leopards seemed to have an extraordinary instinct which enabled them to avoid this danger. Their tracks of several nights running might be seen about a house, but when they were sat up for they never offered a shot. Then when the "sitter up," wearied with two or three profitless nights of watching, gave it up, the very next night perhaps the leopard would come, as fresh tracks near the machān or the carrying off of some animal, would show in the morning.

Of all the times I have had my baits killed by leopards, I have only once known them break the rope and drag away the kill (whereas tigers nearly always did so), and only twice have I had the leopard within the beat. Having fed, they cleared out, leaving the carcass at the picket.

I have more than once found leopard tracks of the night passing by a tied up bait without going up to it. Why the leopard so acted it is difficult to say, unless it is the natural suspicion the felines feel towards animals tied up in the jungle at night, more than usually marked.

The one occasion on which I bagged a leopard it had killed one of my baits tied up for tiger, so the beat was already prepared. The machān commanded the nullah at the mouth of which the bait was tied. Owing to the cover being thick the machān stops were only a hundred yards to either hand. All the stops were "tappers." The beat was a quiet one throughout, with moderate shouting. The line had halted as usual for a quarter of an hour on the river bank, and then continued its advance; within five minutes after which I saw the leopard come walking leisurely along in the nullah. When it arrived under my tree I shot it dead through the back. A male measuring 4ft. to root of tail, 3ft. tail—total 7ft. The calf had been left at the picket with the rope unbroken, the carcass disembowelled and nearly eaten out inside, but the hindquarters were not touched. A tiger always begins his feed on the hindquarters. Leopards have not this invariable custom.

An affair with a leopard in Kashmir was related to me by a sportsman settled in that country, a few days after it happened. He said he was beating for bears, posted on a machān, when out came a leopard, going so fast that he saw he would probably miss it, so he dropped down from his machān, shouted, and ran towards the leopard, which caused it to turn and charge him, when he shot it dead on the muzzle of his gun which went into the leopard's mouth!

The tracks of a leopard are the same in form as those of a tiger or lion, but of course smaller. A male leopard's tracks and a young tiger's about the same size are therefore not distinguishable, and if made by a big male are difficult to tell from those of an ordinary sized tigress, though the forefeet of the former, if the imprint is clear, present a generally rounder appearance than those of the latter.

Before concluding this chapter I will refer to the difference of opinion that has frequently arisen as to whether there are two or only one species of the leopard or panther in India. The "hunting leopard" (*Felis jubata*) is not here considered; it is a separate

species marked with plain spots, whereas the leopard or panther (*Felis pardus*) is marked with rosettes.

Jerdon, Blyth, and other naturalists, consider there is only one species, but two varieties of it, one when full-grown measuring 7ft. to 8ft.* from nose to end of tail, the other 5ft. to 6ft. Jerdon calls the larger—the panther, and the smaller—the leopard; and both by the scientific name of *Felis pardus*. This has not satisfied a number of other authorities and well-known sportsmen. For instance, Sterndale classes them as distinct species, and applies the scientific nomenclature of *Felis pardus* and *Felis panthera* to the larger and smaller respectively; and in English calls them the pard and the panther. Sanderson—*F. pardus* and *F. leopardus*, and panther and leopard. Hicks—*F. panthera* and *F. panthereta*, and panther and pantheret. The latter authority (who it will be observed applies the scientific name to the larger that Sterndale applies to the smaller) is especially severe regarding what he considers the misnomer of “leopard.” He writes:—“I consider that the evidence proves overwhelmingly that the word ‘Leopard’ was in the beginning and can be now only applied rightly to *Felis jubata*; and that anyone calling himself a sportsman who, in the face of this evidence, speaks of *Felis panthera* as ‘Leo-pards’ should be dubbed as ignorant. I have always felt annoyed to hear so-called sportsmen talk about ‘Leo-pards’ when in reality they meant ‘Panthers.’”

The deuce! What are we to do?

I cannot help thinking there is a good deal of pedantry in all this, and that the different styles of nomenclature proposed, only tend to increase the confusion on the subject. “Leopard” is the name generally in use. Kinloch doubts if there are even two varieties of *Felis pardus*. He writes:—“Even the varieties are not, in my opinion, sufficiently defined to be looked upon as permanent. . . . If a large number of skins were collected from different districts, the most strongly marked types of each variety placed at the extremities of a long line, and the remainder carefully arranged between them, in the order of their resemblance to the selected specimens, it would be found that there was a regularly graduated scale between the two, a clearly established chain, without a missing or a faulty link. In fact, it would be impossible for any unprejudiced observer to say where the panthers ended and the leopards began. I believe that, if the same test were applied to the skulls, the same result would be obtained.”

* There is probably not an 8ft. panther or leopard in existence.

CHAPTER IX.

HIMALAYAN BROWN BEAR.

Hindustāni - - Lāl Bhāloo. Kashmiri - - Hārpat.

THIS bear is a fine specimen of the ursine family, and the skin forms a very handsome trophy if obtained in the spring or in the late autumn. In the spring the hair is longest—four to nine inches. In the summer it falls out a great deal, and the skins are poor as trophies, but in autumn the fur begins to grow and thicken, and by the middle of October they are becoming again handsome. The colour varies from dark brown and red brown, to yellowish and brownish grey. The native name “lāl bhāloo” means red bear.

The size of brown bears is very variously stated in works on natural history and shooting. The statement is often met with that a big bear will measure seven feet in length. I have shot a fair number of bears in the Himalayas, and do not believe that a bear (brown or black) exists in those mountains that is seven feet long measured *straight between uprights* from nose to root of tail. The tail is only two or three inches long and should not be included in the measurement. The biggest brown bear I ever shot measured 6ft. 4in.—the smallest 5ft. 2in., and he was an old and therefore full-grown bear. I have never shot a female longer than five feet.

I believe the range of the brown bear is confined to the Western Himalayas, that is from the west of Nepaul to Gilgit. It is not found on the first lower ranges that abut on the Indian plains, nor does it extend northward into the Tibetan provinces. But within these limits it is pretty generally distributed, being perhaps most numerous in Chamba and Kashmir. It was, however, becoming scarce in the latter country until the game laws there, introduced some years ago, limited the number that could be shot.

The following remarks on the habits, etc., of the Himalayan brown

bear are based on my own personal observations, or on many conversations with the hill men and shikāris.

Brown bear are generally found at elevations from 8,000 to 12,000 feet, though in the late summer and in autumn they may come down to 6,000 feet, or even lower, to raid the fields and fruit. I have seen them at well under 6,000 and at well over 12,000.

They come out of their caves—where they have hybernated during the winter—early in the spring, and then affect the lower slopes and open spaces in forest at 8,000 to 9,000 feet, since the snow covering the higher slopes precludes their getting at the grasses and roots which form their chief food. They are very hungry then after their winter's fast, and are out at any hour of the day if undisturbed, digging for roots, grubs, and ants, and feeding on their favourite grasses. The young are born during this time, and also (according to the opinion of some) in the latter part of the hybernating period—usually two at a birth, and stay with the mother till two or three years old. I have often seen a bear with her two cubs of that same or the previous year. I have also seen cubs of different ages with the mother. Once (in May), three cubs, two of them a year old, and one two years old. Another time (in September), two cubs, one (considered by the hill men with me) of that year, and therefore probably four or five months old; and the other of the year before, and therefore nearly one and a half years old. I watched these latter bears for several days. They went up and down the hill, going down in the evening to 6,000 or 7,000 feet to feed on the fruit and fields in the valley during the night; and returning in the early morning to the higher slopes above the forest line at an elevation of 11,000 to 12,000 feet. On these upper slopes they retired to some rocks or other shelter till two or three o'clock in the afternoon, when they would again appear, feeding on the grassy slopes towards the forest below them. We came upon their dung one day with grains of corn in it, and on another day with apricot stones, showing where they had been foraging. On two occasions the larger of the cubs had temporarily separated itself from the family party. We were out at daybreak on the forest line—that is, where the trees ended, and the bare, grassy slopes (running up to the rocky ridges above) began, and saw the mother and younger cub emerge from the forest, going up the hill to their midday retreat. Early in the afternoon we took up a commanding position whence we could watch the whole hill-side we expected the bears would show on, judging by the signs we had found of ground dug up by them in their search for grass roots. After an hour or so we sighted the bears near the

commencement of the forest about half a mile below us—all three of them, the larger cub having rejoined its family. They fed as usual down the hill and disappeared in the forest to work their way gradually down to the fields in the valley. Following, we came upon the bear and her smaller cub rooting about in an open glade; the bigger cub had again gone off by itself. This independent behaviour was perhaps because it wanted to show mother it was getting grown-up and no longer tied to her apron strings!

With regard to the size of cubs at this age, I have never had an opportunity of measuring a brown one, but a black female cub that I shot in a beat, and which must have been about a year and a half old, measured 3ft. 8in.

To resume our survey of the bear's movements through the year. As the snow melts during the summer, and higher slopes are consequently exposed for them to feed on, they move up over the extended ground afforded, going as high perhaps as 12,000 to 13,000 feet, at the heads of remote nullahs where rocks and snow commence to give place to grassy, flowery slopes. In the later summer, and in autumn, as described, they may be found sometimes high up, and sometimes low down, as long as the fruits and crops last: but in October when the fruit is over, and the crops cut, they will all betake themselves to the higher parts of the mountains about and above the forest line—10,000 to 12,000 feet—until winter drives them into the retirement of hibernation. Some bears never go down for the fruit, etc., but remain as high as they can throughout the year. Regarding their taste for fruit, not being tree climbers like the black bear, what fruit they get must be fallen, or what they can reach by rearing themselves against a tree. They are very active in feeding themselves up during October and November, previous to their winter retirement (so that they enter it in fat condition), energetically digging up the ground on the open mountain sides for the grass roots they are fond of, and—some of the hill men will say—for rats and mice. Once, coming upon old brown bear diggings, I noticed a rat or mouse hole at the bottom of one of the excavations, with the usual small mound of loose earth thrown up. My shikāri said the bear had dug for that rat, but had not gone deep enough, and the rat had re-made its habitation! However that may be, the brown bear does not always go in for such small game to satisfy his carnivorous tastes, for he sometimes kills cattle and sheep, and even wild animals. General Kinloch relates in his valuable work "*Large Game Shooting*" how he saw a fine Kashmir stag crossing an open space hotly pursued by a brown

bear. The Kashmir deer are larger than the Scottish. When the bear gets amongst a flock of sheep or goats, a kind of blood-lust has been known to possess him, for cases are on record of his killing twenty or more sheep at a time. He is a clumsy killer, having no method in the matter, but clawing and biting his victim to death wherever he can catch hold of it. I have inspected skins of animals shown me as killed by bears (both brown and black), torn in this way over the back and quarters; and once saw a bullock with a severe wound on its hump, said to have been inflicted the day before by a black bear. All round the wound the back was scored by a firing iron—apparently the Kashmiri herdsman's system of treatment.

Male and female brown bears are generally found apart (though perhaps in the same nullah* or valley within a mile of each other and feeding over much the same ground) except in autumn, when from about the latter part of September till winter they are often found together. They separate however, on retiring to their winter quarters. Two full-grown bears, either male or female, do not go then into the same cave. A female and her cubs go together. A female and her young, perhaps of that year and of the year before, retire into the same cave to hibernate.

Regarding the statement that full-grown bears do not hibernate in the same cave together, it is given as the native opinion on the subject. I have never met a native who said he had actually found bears during their winter torpor. At that time of the year the mountains are too difficult to search over, and the caves holding bears would be likely to be concealed by snow. The opinions expressed are probably based on indications discovered in the caves during the spring and summer, in which it is considered bears have hibernated. The belief that not more than one full-grown bear occupies the same cave in the winter is likewise prevalent amongst the trappers and hunters of North America.

I have never come across any evidence regarding the degree of torpor or insensibility into which bears sink during hibernation except in a book entitled "*The Great North-West and the Great Lake Region of North America.*" The author—Mr. Paul Fountain—relates how (on a 5th December) his party, hunting some 200 miles to the north-east of Lake Winnipeg, found and killed a hibernating bear of the species commonly known as the North American black bear, but of

* A "nullah" in Himalayan parlance commonly means a valley from ten to twenty miles long, and possibly three or four miles wide—a considerable tract of country in fact.

which there is a brown variety. Mr. Fountain writes:—"On the day named we found the tracks of a bear on the snow, and traced them for a mile and a half to a cave in the bank of the stream. Though the tracks did not seem to be very fresh, they must have been made long after the first heavy fall of snow, and since the last, or they would have been covered. That the bear was in the cave there was no doubt, and various expedients were tried to arouse it without success, and at last one of us cautiously ventured in with a torch, and found the animal curled up in a corner, on a bed of leaves and vine-twigs, evidently torn from the rocks outside by the bear, and brought here for the purpose. It gave no signs of life, and it could not be perceived that it was breathing. It was lying just like a huge dog, with its snout turned towards the tail. The muzzle of a Minié rifle was placed to its head, and with one shot its brains were blown out."

The colour of this bear (a female with young) is described as—"dark, rusty brown rather than black." She measured 4ft. gin. from nose to root of tail.

The brown bear has not sharp sight. You may cross quite open ground in full view of them, with hat and clothes of a right colour, if a quarter of a mile off, and even at half that distance, in the case of a single bear, if you watch it as you go, and remain motionless whenever it chances to look in your direction.

Their sense of smell, however, is acute. I have been winded by them at about a quarter of a mile. In approaching them it is therefore of the first importance to note the direction of the wind, and the influence the conformation of the ground may have in carrying currents of it from you to the bear.

From my experience, bears do not seem to mind reports of a rifle if not very close—say half a mile away, as I have found them apparently unaffected by such, perhaps taking the sound to be made by falling rocks. I recall particularly one case of the kind. I had fired several shots at a bear, all of which had missed, and was toiling up the hill towards camp in a dejected frame of mind, when my shikāri sighted a brown bear. Looking through the glasses I saw what at first seemed to be an enormous bear in a small open space half a mile or so below us, and about the same distance (as the crow flies) from where I had been firing. Then I made it out to be two bears close together. Evening was drawing in, and the shikāri (a very experienced local man) advised hunting for them the next morning; but I decided to try at once, as they commenced to play together and there was cover fairly close up to them. So down the

hill we went and made a successful approach to within seventy yards of the bears. I fired at the bigger and dropped him. The other (a female in the shikāri's opinion) escaped. I found I had killed a fine male bear 5ft. 8in. in length, with handsome dark brown fur, thick and long, though the summer was getting on—the month being June. The shikāri said he had never before seen a male and female brown bear in company at that time of year. However, it could not be a certainty that the other was a female.

If brown bears see or wind a man, they will probably either leave the nullah altogether or lie very low and not show for days. I have only once come upon a bear again that has gone away on winding or seeing me, though I may have hunted for it for several days afterwards. No doubt on those parts of the hills where the shepherds come (from June to September) with their flocks and dogs, bears which remain in their vicinity are accustomed to seeing and winding the men occasionally, besides hearing their shouting and the barking of their dogs, but they keep much closer than usual in consequence, and rarely show in the daytime in such localities. In fact, sheep coming up over a nullah spoil the shooting there.

Traces of brown bear are :—

(1) Ground dug up.

The claws of the fore feet are three to four inches long, and—with the powerful arm—well adapted for digging. The excavations made are usually two to three feet in length, rather less in width, and six inches to a foot or more in depth. Several of these close together, which can often be seen from some distance off, will show where a brown bear has been at work. There may be many such excavations over a hill-side affected for some days by a bear.

(2) Old tree trunks and stumps, and their roots, cut about and dug into, the chips lying around, and the earth between the roots also dug into.

This is likewise done by black bear but not to the same extent, the digging being slighter, both into the wood and the earth. The fore claws of black bear are neither so long nor so well adapted for digging as those of brown bear, and they do not dig and root up the ground like the latter, though they will sometimes scratch away the surface to a few inches in depth.

Occasionally some hairs are left on the tree, whose colour will decide which kind of bear was at work. If the forefoot track of a brown bear is clearly imprinted near the spot, it will also be a proof on that point, as will be explained further on.

Bears dig into old trees for grubs, which—my shikāri informed me—are of a whitish colour, an inch to an inch and a half long, as thick as a finger, and only come into being in old or dead trees.

(3) Grasses cropped.

There are certain grasses liked by brown bears, and known to the hill men.

(4) Boulders and large flat stones turned over for the insects that may be found under them.

If plain forefoot tracks or hairs are not to be found, it will be impossible to tell whether brown or black bears have done this, unless the signs are high up above the forest line, and therefore on ground not usually affected by black bear.

(5) Sleeping places.

Bears (both brown and black) make very comfortable ones for themselves. They hollow out the ground in a circular form, four to five feet in diameter, under a tree or overhanging rock, and sometimes line their beds with grass or small branches. Once, when I was looking at one of these sleeping-places, which was nicely sheltered by a tree, and had a comfortable layer of fir twigs in it, my shikāri remarked that bears were very clever animals. He said they did not usually take the trouble to make a bed of twigs or grass except in wet weather, when they wished to avoid contact with the damp ground while sleeping. The weather had been very wet. The signs at this particular sleeping-place indicated that the bear had not used it for nearly a week, in the shikāri's opinion. Otherwise I should have been inclined to watch the ground for this sybaritic bear.

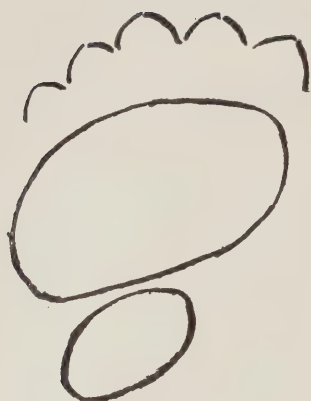
(6) Dung.

A fact useful for the hunter to note is that when feeding on stone fruit, such as apricots, etc., brown bear swallow stones and all, while black bear take out the stones before eating the fruit. If, therefore, dung is come across with fruit stones in it, it is certainly that of brown bear. Otherwise, there is no difference in the dung of either species. Feeding much on apricots gives the dung a red-brown tinge, whereas ordinarily it is a greenish black colour.

(7) Tracks.

As illustrated. The black bear has not the forefoot heel pad separate from the sole, as in the brown bear. The general aspect of the black's tracks, both fore and hind, is therefore like that of the hind feet of the brown.

Bears' hind feet are, as a rule, slightly narrower and longer than the fore, but I have seen them with no difference in these respects.



Left fore foot



Right fore foot



Left hind foot



Right hind foot

FIG. 14.—General form of male brown bear tracks, if clearly imprinted.
About a quarter size.

The impress of the claws is not usually apparent in tracks, unless on muddy ground, and is therefore not shown in the illustrations. If apparent, the mark of the middle claw of the forefoot in a full-grown brown bear would project about $2\frac{1}{2}$ inches from the toe, and of the hindfoot, about half that length. This corresponds to a *straight* measure of the claw showing beyond the toe.

The best way to shoot brown bear is to watch the open parts of the hill-sides where their fresh traces have been found, and when they are seen, to stalk them.

The skins are in best order in April and May, but as the higher parts of the mountains are then covered with snow, they keep very much to the forest, and are difficult to find.

From the latter part of May to the beginning of June, however, when the snow has become less on the upper slopes, and the sheep have not yet arrived, is a favourable time for brown bear shooting.

From June to September the shepherds come up the nullahs with their flocks, and spread over the mountain sides, causing the bears to keep close and not show till late in the evening, or to change their ground to remote and undisturbed parts.

In August and September the bears may be either high up the hill, or low down for the fruit and crops.

From July to the middle of September there is a great deal of rain and mist unfavourable for mountain shooting. Moreover the bears' coats are poor during this season.

October and November are the best months to try for brown bear. The weather is then clear and bright. Snow rarely falls to any great extent (only lying temporarily) before the latter part of November. There are no sheep. The bears are to be found on their open grass feeding grounds about and above the forest line in the mornings and afternoons, they not having the fruit and crops below to attract them; and the higher, open parts of the mountains being then clearer of snow than at any other time of the year, until the first falls occur.

My first acquaintance with brown bear was made in the Mangli Nullah in Chamba early in the month of May. I had seen two bears on a distant hill-side one afternoon, and started at daybreak the next morning with the village shikāri, and two other men carrying impedimenta, to hunt for them. About ten o'clock we sighted the bears some three-quarters of a mile away on the opposite side of a nullah, walking about on the open ground; so off we went at once and made a most successful stalk, getting under cover of a rise of ground within thirty yards of them. I stood up to fire, on which both the bears rose

on their hind legs looking at me and giving me splendid shots. I blazed away into both, first at one, then at the other (the shikāri handing me cartridges for reloading), and soon had them down. They were females, one not full-grown but perhaps four years old; it may have been a young one staying with its mother beyond the usual time. I kept no reliable record of the size of bears I shot in those days. Having skinned them we made for camp, which we reached by dusk. On the way home we came to a steep snow slope down which our direction lay. My shikāri sat down and invited me to negotiate it sliding with him, by sitting behind and taking hold of his shoulders. I did this and away we went. There was over 200 yards of slope, and as we descended the pace increased to what seemed a terrific rate. I lost my balance and turned over, causing the shikāri to do the same, and over and over we rolled together down the incline till brought up in a snow drift at the bottom. My rifle barrels were filled with snow, but we were neither of us any the worse. Sliding down snow slopes is sometimes a good way of getting home quickly if you are expert at it, otherwise it may be disastrous and be a case of the more haste the less speed.

I mentioned having two men to carry impedimenta. Shooting in the mountains is often very cold work; as, for instance, when you take up a position commanding view of ground you expect to sight game on, and wait in all weathers through prolonged periods of watching. You require an overcoat for these watches to prevent being chilled, but you cannot wear it while in movement, either struggling up and down difficult hill-sides or stalking your game. You then want it carried for you, besides your day's ration, water bottle, haversack, spare grass shoes, etc. Your men also carry their own necessities, and may have to bring home heads and skins. So you want a couple besides the man acting as shikāri. Sometimes it is advisable to take three or four more men in order to watch ground from several different points. I generally gave the shikāri my rifle and field glasses, but carried a small glass (at the right focus) myself in an outside breast pocket, attached by a cord to a buttonhole. So worn it was almost as handy and readily used as an eye glass. Mountain shooting is hard work, however fit you may be, so it is as well to carry as little as possible yourself. The hill men, living from generation to generation at high elevations, and accustomed to mountain climbing from their childhood, do not feel the toil to the same extent.

Grass shoes, in my opinion, are troublesome to wear. I prefer

ordinary hob-nailed boots (but fastening with a buckle and strap passing over the instep and round the ankle, instead of by laces), and carrying a pair of light canvas boots with rubber, cotton, or rope soles, to be put on if considered necessary for a stalk. Boots fastening with a buckle and strap are easily and quickly put on and off.

I once had a very successful shoot in Barmaor (the eastern part of Chamba), getting several fine brown bears. One of them was bagged in rather a lucky way. I had made a hut near the village of Kukti my headquarters, where several nullahs join, and used to make trips up the different nullahs for a few days at a time, with the village shikāri and six or seven men as carriers and look-outs, taking only two *tentes d'abris*, and then returning to my headquarters. On this occasion my little tents were pitched some miles up the Kukti Pass nullah on a grassy flat by the rushing stream, with a steep, craggy hill rising abruptly over them, and separated from the further mountain by a jungly ravine. I had been out all day up to the head of a branch nullah (where I had seen a brown bear and two cubs) that ran down from the rocks and snows of the Kukti Pass range, and was undressing in my tent, when the shikāri came and said there was a big bear a short way off. I put on my boots and a coat, took my rifle (a double .500 black powder express, with the ordinary copper-tubed express bullet), and went off immediately. It was beginning to get dark. The bear was going up the hillside above the tents, towards the ravine. We followed him quickly and arrived within seventy or eighty yards when he was slowly entering the commencement of the jungle. I was blown with my spurt up the hill, but resting my rifle on the shikāri's shoulder I managed to get a broadside shot as the bear turned for a moment or two and stood. It was dusk, and I could see the bear's body above my sight but indistinctly as I pressed the trigger. The report of the rifle was followed by a momentary stillness, then a crashing of the bushes above, and we saw the bear come rolling down the hill straight on to us like a small avalanche. We ran out of the way sharp, and he passed close by me, rolling over in bounds down the hill for another 200 to 300 yards till brought up by some bushes. We descended and found him dead—a fine male bear with dark brown fur. It was with great difficulty that half a dozen men brought the body into camp close by. The bullet had hit rather far back from the shoulder, but the bear was probably standing at an angle and not full broadside to me, so that the bullet had slanted forward into the chest cavity.

The measurements were—length from nose to root of tail 5ft. 9in. :

height at shoulder 3ft. 5in.: smallest girth behind shoulder 4ft. 3in.: smallest girth of neck 2ft. 6in. The height was a straight measure between uprights at heel and shoulder on the line of the foreleg. The girths were taken with a fairly tight tape over the hair. This bear had perhaps made his headquarters for the time in the jungly ravine above our bivouac, only leaving it in the evening to retire again at earliest dawn. Some old bears live very warily in this manner. Coming up the valley in the early morning from some huts where we had passed the night, we noticed the fresh tracks of a large bear which had evidently made his way up the valley a short time before us. These were in all probability the tracks of this bear returning to his ravine in the very early morning. In the evening he came down towards the grassy flat on which we had pitched our tents (no doubt a favourite feeding ground), but winding or hearing us was making his way back again, when he was seen, overtaken, and shot. His death was the occasion of great rejoicing, the men saying he often killed their sheep and goats. I gave my followers tea, sugar, and a sheep to celebrate the event.

Another time that I got a brown bear close to camp, I was bivouacked with a *tente d'abris* on a forest-covered ridge at an elevation of a little over 10,000 feet (by my aneroid), hunting for Kashmir stag, when at daybreak one morning my shikâri ran up and reported a brown bear close by. Starting at once we came on the bear in an open glade about a quarter of a mile from the tents, and I shot him dead with a bullet in the chest, sending him rolling over and over a long way down the hill.

My wife and I were camped one May at an elevation of over 10,000 feet, on a spur running roughly north and south, and dividing the head branches of the Almi Nullah in Chamba. To the north of us were the snow-covered mountains bounding the heads of the Almi branch nullahs. To the south lay the main Almi Nullah (that we had marched up), with steep forest-covered slopes, winding down to the Râvi River. Beyond the Râvi rose the first range of the Himalayas overlooking the plains, its tops all snow-covered. The scenery was magnificent whichever way we looked. Camp was a little below the forest line with a good deal of snow lying about in patches. Some 600 feet higher up our spur, and probably at an elevation of 11,000 feet, were clumps of birch forest and rhododendron bushes in flower, forming practically the limit of vegetation in that direction. From there, by going a little way to the required side, good views were obtainable of both branch nullahs. That to the east was very steep and densely forested. The west nullah was easier ground with forest

in parts dense, and in parts more open, with open spaces interspersed. I had seen a brown bear and three cubs (one two years old, and two one year old) several times while watching the west nullah, and my wife had also seen them from camp itself.* One morning soon after leaving camp we sighted, first a black bear in a glade below us on the east hill side of the west nullah; then the brown bear and her three cubs on the opposite (west) hill-side; and finally, a single brown bear on the grassy flats by the stream (then but a snow-filled channel) towards the head of the nullah. We had seen six bears in less than half an hour. We made up the nullah at once for the solitary brown bear (which we had never seen before), and managed to get within 250 yards of him. He was then crossing the snow-covered stream-bed at the bottom of the nullah, evidently returning to lie up in the forest on the other (west) hill-side. I would not risk such a long shot, feeling pretty sure I should obtain further chances if the bear was not disturbed, so as we could not get closer we watched him go slowly up into the forest—a fine looking male bear. We watched for some time and he did not come out of the strip of forest he had entered. So I made for camp and arranged for men to watch the cover and give me news when the bear left it. In acting thus I made a great mistake. I should have stayed and watched myself. About half-past one news arrived that the bear had come out and was feeding on the same ground on which we had seen him in the morning. I started immediately, and descending into the nullah worked up the stream-bed. It had steep, high banks affording good cover. The look-out man on the top of the hill with whom I had previously arranged a code, signalled me that the bear was still there. After going up the snow-covered stream-bed for some way, I climbed up the bank to look over the ground. I could see no bear. Still the look-out man signalled he was there. So I proceeded along the stream-bed again, and after working up a little further, again looked over the edge. At this time a storm of rain and hail came on. I could see nothing. The look-out man then descended and told us the bear had made down the nullah while we were coming up the stream-bed, had passed us without our seeing him, and entered the forest below. Perhaps the storm prevented our seeing him. With the exception of sudden storms of this kind the weather was fine, but very cold at the time.

* During our hill trips together, my wife has seen both brown and black bear, leopard, ibex, and goral (the Himalayan chamois). The ibex she saw on one of our marches in the upper part of the Kulu Valley. We were probably at a height of 11,000 feet, and the ibex was standing like a statue on the summit of a crag perhaps 1,500 feet above us.

I was out at daybreak the next morning and examined the nullah up to its head, but nothing showed. In the afternoon I looked over the east nullah, and, having seen nothing, was returning to camp along the spur dividing the nullahs, when we made out the bear on an open space on the west hill-side of the west nullah. It was then too late to go after him, so we watched him till dusk. He made his way down to another open feeding patch, and then entered the forest below. I was out again morning and afternoon the next day, and posted look-outs for continuous watching. About six in the evening we sighted the bear high up the west hill-side on one of the bright green open patches where brown bears find their favourite grasses. It was too late to go such a distance so we sat and watched him. He stayed on this patch about half an hour and then began to make his way down the hill transversely towards the head of the nullah. Sometimes he was lost to view in forest, and sometimes in sight crossing open spaces. By seven o'clock he had entered the strip of forest we marked him into the first morning we saw him, and soon after he emerged from it and walked about in the open at the head of the nullah above this cover. If we could have known he would go to this point, we should have had time to meet him there, but of course it was impossible to tell where or how far he would go. We watched him on this ground till it was too dark to see (about 7.30) and then made for camp. We were out again before daybreak and found the bear on the same ground. We commenced our approach at once by descending to the stream-bed, intending to stalk him under its cover, but he began to move off almost at the same time, and when we gained the stream-bed he was walking away up it out of shot. We followed on and the look-out men marked him into some birch forest—the last cover towards the head of the nullah. We took up a position for watching and remained there the whole day, but the bear did not show again. We watched till dusk and then returned disappointed to camp.

We continued observing both the east and west nullahs, for several more days, as the bear was a fine one and I should have liked very much to get him, but we never saw him again, though we sighted the female and cubs occasionally, always feeding on the open patches on the west hill-side of the west nullah. On one of these occasions we also saw a black bear high up the hill, and afterwards, looking over the east nullah, made out two black bears on a distant open space. It would have taken a couple of hours to get there, and while we looked they disappeared in the forest. So altogether we saw seven bears that morning. The big brown bear must have gone right

away to some other nullah. The hill men could give no opinion as to what caused him to change his ground. So far as we knew he had never either seen or winded us. However, he may have winded some of us the last day, or become aware that men were dogging him.

Less than a month after this I got a very fine brown bear in an unexpected manner. We were marching along the Kashmir route in the Padri Pass nullah in Chamba, and had put up in a forest bungalow on the road, at an elevation of 5,970 feet according to the Government map. A local shikāri turned up and offered to show me black bear. I went out with him in the afternoon and got a long shot at one across the nullah. We found blood and followed it up till evening set in, when we returned home. Early the next morning we took up the trail again, and carried it on for an hour or so through dense cover along a very steep, difficult hill-side, when the blood having ceased and there seeming no reasonable chance of coming up with the bear we gave it up. We then ascended the hill to look over fresh ground, and about nine o'clock sighted a brown bear through the glasses, crossing a bright green patch of grass in the bottom of a distant branch nullah. I had not expected to find a brown bear so low as this—not much above the level of the forest bungalow on the other side of the valley. We started at once to approach the bear by a shepherd's path that ran along a hill-side in the required direction. We gained the path and had been going along it in single file pretty quickly—half running, half walking—for a few minutes, when at a bend we suddenly met the bear face to face coming up by the same path. The shikāri, who was leading, flattened himself against the hill-side to clear my front, and, hastily getting my rifle (a double .577 black powder express) from the man behind me, I let drive the right barrel into the inside of the point of the bear's left shoulder as he stood on the path five or six yards off, before he had taken in the situation. He rolled over at the shot and I gave him the left. He then slipped over the edge of the path and went crashing down the hill-side. We followed in his track, finding plenty of blood, which led down underneath a snow bridge at the bottom of the nullah. We followed the bear up into this, where it was difficult to see anything till the eyes got accustomed to the darkness, too low to stand up in, and filled with the deafening roar of the torrent, and found him dead there, lying close to the foaming water. He might easily have been washed on under the frozen snow and ice, and lost. The men (five in number) dragged the body out of this snow cavern after much labour, and rolled it into a convenient position for skinning. The tape

showed the length to be 5ft. 11in. to root of tail, measured straight between uprights. A big, heavily made, male bear with dark fur—the second biggest I have ever shot. I found either of my bullets would have killed him, the first being in the chest entering near the point of the left shoulder, and the second behind the right ear. He must have been a dead bear as he rolled down the gully and under the snow bridge. Where I shot him could not have been at a greater elevation than 8,000 feet, and was probably nearer 7,000, which was low for a brown bear in June. The shikāri said he had noticed the bear about a week before on this ground, and that it was likely he was in the habit of coming down to a favourite feeding-place, and returning up by the path we met him on. We got back to the bungalow by midday, when I received my wife's congratulations. She had heard the two shots. The skin pegged out 7ft. 5in.

One November I was camped with small tents a little way down from the top of a ridge, at an elevation (by my aneroid) of 10,500 feet. The ridge was an immense spur from the range dividing Khistwar from the south-eastern part of Kashmir proper, and ran roughly north and south. The summit commanded good views of the nullahs to east and west. It was generally bare of forest with the exception of clumps of trees here and there; but a few hundred feet below on both sides scattered forest commenced, increasing in thickness towards the lower slopes, which, with the bottom of the nullahs, were covered with forest. On the slopes, however, the forest was broken by many large open spaces, giving it a park-like aspect. The range from which the ridge trended down towards the Vale of Kashmir, rose barren and rocky, and partly snow-covered, bounding the view and the heads of the nullahs southwards.

I was trying for Kashmir stag and brown bear. The weather was clear and fine, but very cold so late in the year at that elevation. I used to find the water in my bottle frozen at night; which was inconvenient to me as I have a habit of taking an occasional gulp or two of water at any time in the night: so in order to ensure a drink I had to take the bottle to bed with me! I also took the cartridges intended for the morrow's use into bed, as cold has a bad effect on cordite powder. The thermometer used to register as low as 24° with the tent all closed up. My shikāri said that brown bears were never to be found out then at this height in the early morning, as the ground was too frozen to allow of their rooting it up, and moreover the frozen ground cracked their feet, so they did not move till the afternoon. I could not prove him wrong as the only bears we saw at that time

were seen in the afternoon. There was a good deal of "sign," in the shape of ground rooted up, along parts of the ridge, and I used to watch regularly for stags or bears.

One afternoon about half-past four we sighted a fine looking brown bear coming along from the upper part of the nullah under the west side of the ridge. The ground he was on was fairly open, with patches of scrub jungle and clumps of trees. We started for the bear at once, and on getting above where we had seen him last, descended the slope keeping a sharp look out, but could see nothing more of him. We searched in vain, and ultimately made our way back to where we had left a man on the ridge, who said the bear had gone on down the nullah without stopping, and we had missed him. Evidently we had cut in on his line too late. Seeing that the bear was moving steadily on when we sighted him, we should have tried to take up a position forward of and above him, whence, without giving him our wind (which was blowing up the nullah), we could have seen ground he was likely to be soon passing over. Darkness was now setting in so we made our way along the ridge towards camp. The bear having gone on down the nullah under the ridge, there was a chance of coming across him again. This happened, on an open part of the ridge where we had noticed recent diggings and rootings. It was dusk, and a moment or two before we saw the bear I had most unluckily struck the iron point of my alpenstock against a stone with a clang. I think the bear must have heard this and thereby had his attention drawn towards us, for immediately after being sighted by the shikāri, who was leading, he went away at a quick pace, and it was improbable that he would have seen or heard us but for the noise I made with the alpenstock. The wind was favourable. I did not make out the bear till he was quite a hundred yards away, and then no shot was offered in the falling darkness. I hunted for this bear for several days but never saw him again.

During a summer my wife and I lately spent at Gulmarg in Kashmir I engaged a shikāri named Lassoo to get me news of brown bear. I had been out unsuccessfully for a few days in May. One morning in June Lassoo turned up at our house and reported he had obtained news of a good male brown bear on the northern side of Karal Nangal, a mountain eight miles south-east of Gulmarg as the crow flies, forming part of the range that, at a general height here of about 12,000 feet, bounds the southern side of the Vale of Kashmir. I started as soon as I could with small tents and a dozen carriers to hunt for the bear. The loads were light and a week's rations were

taken, which could be replenished within twenty-four hours by sending a couple of men down to the nearest substantial village in the Vale. My party was therefore quite independent, and we could pitch camp anywhere we liked within reach of water. Mountain streams being numerous, there was no difficulty in regard to that.

I hunted the northern slopes of the range round Karal Nangal for three days before coming across the male bear; but had seen a female with two cubs of that year, and a single young brown bear estimated by Lassoos to be full two years old. I expect that is the age at which they generally begin to shift for themselves, though some stay a year longer with their mother.

On the afternoon of the fourth day we were working our way along the steep northern slope of the range overlooking the Vale, finding occasional bear sign. The bottoms of the ravines that scored the mountain side, running down from the main ridge, were partially filled with snow, forming steep snow slopes on which it was sometimes necessary to cut our steps. These ravines were generally open, but the spurs dividing them were clothed with forest. About and above us the pine trees and grass slopes of the lower parts of the mountain had given place to birch trees, rhododendron bushes, and stony ground with occasional grass, many of the birch trees quite leafless, their bare white trunks and branches looking spectral and ghostlike in the gloomy, cloudy weather. We were probably at an elevation of 11,000 feet. High up towards the crest of the ridge were masses of towering rocks, and a good deal of snow.

About four o'clock we selected a place amongst some rocks from which to watch. Lassoos ensconced himself with the glasses at a point that commanded a most likely looking ravine, the other men went a little way to where they could look over further ground, and I sat down to read.

A few minutes afterwards, I saw Lassoos creeping down the rock towards me, making earnest signs the exact purport of which I did not understand, beyond that he had seen something important, so I put my book in my bag. His signs redoubled on this movement of mine, and getting nearer he whispered—"Hilo mat, bhāloo hai" (don't move there is a bear). He then pointed out a brown bear standing within full view of me on the slope of the next spur, about 250 yards away. He had walked over the spur at a point a little above us on the general slope of the hill, when Lassoos had luckily seen him. He might easily not have done so as he was looking mostly down the ravine, and I was reading.

As the bear was standing in full view, all I could do was to sit perfectly still. Lassoo was hidden by the rock. The bear began to move slowly down the slope of the spur in our direction, and I drew myself towards the rock. Then the bear stopped, and I remained motionless. He seemed to be looking at me. Then he moved on again, and I gained the shelter of the rock. We then saw another bear a short way behind. The two came on slowly. The first was the bigger—a rather light coloured bear; the second may have been a female, though it was an unusual time of year for males and females to go together. I took my double '577 and got into position for shooting. I had a '303 with me, but determined if possible to give the bear a good heavy bullet to start with. The leading and bigger bear came steadily on until hidden from my sight by a hollow some seventy yards away. He remained in this a few minutes, and then I saw him slowly appear, first his head and then his chest coming up our side of the hollow. On to his chest went my rifle. The bear halted, apparently looking straight at me, and gave me a fair shot facing me at about sixty yards. I fired, and the bear disappeared back in the hollow, growling and roaring in a way that showed he was well hit. "Sālām" said Lassoo delightedly, and we ran forward to get a view of the bear and to try for a shot at the other, which we knew was close by. On gaining the rise commanding the hollow, we saw him dragging himself away, and the other bear going hard up the hill. I gave the wounded one the left of the '577 in the back, and taking the '303 from Lassoo, fired at the other, then perhaps 150 yards off, but I was breathless from running and missed. Looking at the wounded bear I saw him again dragging himself away, so was obliged to turn my attention to him instead of firing any more at the other. I gave him two shots with the small rifle, at the second of which he collapsed and rolled over and over a long way down the ravine. We went down and found him dead. An old male bear, thickset, with a large head and neck, but not big in the way of length—only 5ft. 2in. from nose to root of tail, measured straight between uprights. His teeth and claws were a good deal worn. Lassoo judged him to be from sixteen to twenty years old. He believed bears lived to about twenty-five years,* quoting his father as his authority for this, who, he said, was a great shikāri in his time, and observer of bears.

The fur was not damaged by the roll down the hill, and was very thick and handsome, of a silvery grey in parts. On the several

* I should think he under-estimated the age to which they live.

occasions that I have known bears roll down over stones and boulders, I have not found it damage the hair.

Though the bear was not a big one, we were very happy over having killed him, the undoubted head of the family for whom we had been searching for some days. Regarding this family, we had now seen six brown bears in a less number of days on the northern slopes of Karal Nangal, within ten miles as the crow flies of Gulmarg, which was a place containing 300 to 400 English visitors at that season. But I have sometimes worked hard and long in remote parts of the Himalayas without seeing a good brown bear.

My first bullet had hit in the throat; my second in the back a short way from the root of the tail; the third and fourth (from the small rifle) behind the shoulder. We skinned the bear and made for camp, which we reached after nightfall, very wet from a violent thunderstorm with vivid lightening, hail, and heavy rain, that came on before we finished the skinning, and continued till nearly midnight. But when the hunter has been successful, no weather can affect him.



CHAPTER X.

HIMALAYAN BLACK BEAR.

Hindustāni - - Kālā Bhāloo. Kashmiri - - Hārpat.

THIS bear runs rather smaller than the brown. I do not believe, for instance, that there is a black bear over six feet long in the Himalayas, if measured in the correct manner.

The colour is deep black with a whitish chin and a white V shaped mark on the chest. The fur is shorter and less thick than that of the brown bear.

The range of the black bear (*Ursus torquatus*) extends throughout the Himalayas and into the hill tracts of Burma.* They are fairly numerous, affecting forest chiefly, and are therefore found lower than brown bear as a rule. I have, however, seen black bear at considerable elevations. Two cases in particular are recorded in my diary: one, in May, of a single black bear (in all probability a male) high up a snow-covered nullah at an elevation of certainly over 12,000 feet; the other, in July, of a female and cub right up at the head of a desolate, rocky side nullah, close to the snow at a height of probably 13,000 feet.

They are often found in the vicinity of villages and cultivation in the summer and autumn, feeding much on the crops (especially Indian corn) and fruit. Before these ripen, and in the late autumn, when they are over, black bears feed chiefly on grasses, and may be found pretty high up—7000 to 10,000 feet. They vary their vegetarian diet with flesh, frequently killing cattle, goats, and sheep. They will also feed on carcasses they may come across, even those of their own kind.

* In Burma, the native name for this species is "Wetwun."

A sportsman once told me how he had killed a bear, and going to the place the next day, found another bear eating the body.

Black bears are good tree-climbers, even at an early age ; for I once saw a cub (probably three or four months old) climb quickly up a tree about twenty yards from me, which was bare of branches for nine or ten feet from the ground. I had come suddenly upon the mother and two cubs, and this one, finding itself deserted, I suppose, by the quick retreat of the others, thought this the best way of escaping.

Their capacity as tree-climbers makes it easy for them to get at the fruit, and one method of shooting them is to walk very quietly along where there are fruit trees, on a moonlight night, and catch a bear unawares literally "up a tree." When so surprised they do not climb down, but let themselves go with a run, hind feet first.

Black bears do not hibernate so completely as brown. The natives say that they prefer hollow trees to caves, as winter quarters, and that full-grown bears (with the exception of a female with cubs) hibernate by themselves. I, however, once found three practically full-grown black bears in a cave in October, and shot one of them—a male. The cave made very snug quarters, and it is difficult to see any reason why these three bears should not have hibernated there together, as they could live amicably in the cave at other times.

The black bear is credited with sharper sight and hearing than the brown, and an equally good sense of smell. He is also considered to be a more dangerous adversary. Several British sportsmen have been killed in encounters with black bear, and many natives, either in beats or when meeting one unexpectedly in forest.

The traces (including tracks) of black bear have already been mostly described with those of the brown bear, but additional ones are—the ravages committed at night in standing crops (Indian corn especially), the stalks and heads of the corn trampled, broken, and scattered about ; and their marks on fruit trees in climbing up and breaking the fruit-bearing branches. Also, a "sign" peculiar to black bear, my shikāri, Lassoo, used to say, is the bark of a tree torn off. The only such sign that I distinctly remember coming across, and recorded in my diary, was in the month of May, and would go to prove the truth of his statement. We were walking through forest when Lassoo pointed out a tree with its bark newly stripped off for half a foot or so, and the wood itself torn ; and said it was done by a black bear. A moment after he spoke we heard a rustle above us : I looked

out for a shot, but did not see anything, nor did Lasso, but a man behind me said he saw a black bear disappear up the hill.

A peculiarity of the species is the way it occasionally has of coiling itself up and rolling down a hill to escape from "a tight place." The time I saw this best exemplified was when beating a hill side one day, a bear and cub came out rather above me. I gave the bear my right at about fifty yards, and she howled and came half running, half tumbling down towards me. My shikāri, though armed with a spear, scrambled up the hill side to get out of her way. The right, and also the safer plan for him, would have been to stay by me if he thought the bear was going to charge. Just as I was going to give her my left she disappeared in some bushes, and reappeared a little lower, rolling over and over like a ball down the hill. I fired two more shots at her as she rolled down (the last with my second rifle which I had placed beside me) but I think they were misses. At the bottom of the hill she recovered herself and went away up a wooded nullah. We followed this bear up for some time, but there was not much blood. She had evidently only been shot through the fore arm and was going strong on three legs. The cub (a one-year old—about) vanished in another direction.

Hunting for black bear in the forests in which they usually live is very much like looking for a needle in a haystack. Still, with patience, and watching open spaces on ground where you know them to be, shots may be obtained. The best way, however, is to beat for them during August and September in forest adjacent to Indian corn fields where their ravages are apparent. You may on rare occasions get a brown bear while beating for black. I once did, at as low an elevation as something under 6000 feet. He was rather old, with worn teeth, and his coat was in poor condition, it being the end of July.

I look upon beating for black bear as very good sport if they are at all plentiful, but there will certainly be many disappointing days. There is always an excitement about it however. You stand at your selected post, facing the beaters (the pine trees not being suitable for machāns nor having convenient shooting positions in their branches), with your second-gun bearer crouching by you. The shouting and the beating of the drums draw nearer and nearer. You look out with ever increasing intentness for a bear, not only with you eyes but with your ears. The latter will generally give you the first warning of the approach of the game. A rustling perhaps is only followed by a musk deer or a fox, that

passes you—it may be—within a few paces, not seeing you as you stand motionless in your drab hat and clothes, without a speck of white or other colour showing anywhere. Then suddenly arises an increased uproar from the beating line, and the angry “woof, woof” of a bear. You strain with eyes and ears for the first indication of its approach. Amidst the din of the beaters you catch the sound of the quick movement of some large animal in the cover, and out bursts the bear close by, when the rest will depend on your shooting.

Sometimes a bear is driven straight on to you. When shooting once with H——, a brother officer, we were posted less than a dozen yards from each other, but each commanding a different slope of ground. The jungle was dense right up to us, though a fairly clear view of a width of three or four paces was afforded to the right and left by a path on which we stood. This is often the case, and requires quick shooting to hit a bear crossing the path. As the beaters drew near I heard a rustling in the cover directly in front of me as I stood on the path facing towards the beaters, and in a few moments a bear appeared, coming at a trot straight on to me. I gave it my right when only two or three paces off and not even then clear of the cover. At the shot the bear checked and stood up on its hind legs, when I gave it my left and it fell back out of sight. Recovering itself, it came on again, passing close by H——, who dropped it dead.

Most of my beating was done along the northern foot of the range bounding the southern side of the Vale of Kashmir, between Bārāmoola and Shopian. It was easy in this part of the country to obtain any number of beaters up to a hundred, but for economy's sake I did not generally use more than fifty or sixty. You will have perhaps half a dozen drives in a day, beating likely ravines and portions of a hill side; and the cover will be nearly always thick and continuous. It will be seldom that a likely detached cover or ravine will be found. Black bear are often difficult to drive, breaking back through the beaters or to a side through the stops. At one time I employed lines of different coloured small flags, strung on cords in lengths of twenty-five yards, to tie to trees and bushes along the flanks of a beat as an aid to the stops, or in place of them, in order to have greater force in the beating line. I found these flag lines occasionally successful in driving the bears within the required distance of my post, but I also found they frequently failed of their purpose, the bears taking no notice and going through them. As there seemed to be no certainty in the matter, I ultimately gave up their use, employing only men as stops.

It is best to drive bears either up or along the side of a hill. I have, however, known bears allow themselves to be driven down hill. One case especially, when we beat a ravine nearly a mile long running down from a low range. For the first beat I took my post right up at the head of the ravine, which was beaten up to me. A bear was afoot, but broke to a side. The beat was a very long one, and we could not afford sufficient men for stops, so only posted a few men at points on the flanks to act chiefly as look-outs. My position was selected where it was considered that, according to the lie of the ground, the bear would probably come.

The bear was seen to re-enter the ravine. So I hurried down and took post in the bottom of the ravine (here about 300 yards wide), well beyond where he had re-entered, and the cover was driven down towards me. The bear broke at a quick trot across a small bit of open ground about a hundred yards above me. I fired and missed. As the bear had not been seen to break away to any other jungle, the beaters were sent down to the lower end of the ravine, and again beat up towards me. This time the bear passed fifty or sixty yards from me, but in thick cover, so that I only got a fleeting sight of him. The look-outs said he was still in the ravine, so the beaters went on by its borders to its head, and beat back again down towards me. I took post for this beat near where the bear had passed when I last saw him. He came close past me, going hard, and I hit him in the leg. The beaters went round to the foot of the ravine and beat up it for the third time, I remaining in the same position. The bear again came close past me and I rolled him over dead at last.

Here was a case of a bear being twice driven down hill, and sticking to the same ravine after being twice fired at (once wounded) and driven up and down four times; to be finally killed in the fifth beat, when he returned by exactly the same line on which he had just been wounded. But this bear's behaviour was very exceptional.

The system of beating I ultimately adopted as the result of experience, was as follows :—

The beaters, all armed with axes or heavy staves (called "lathi"), were formed in three parties. With the centre party were two village drums (called "dol" in Kashmiri) and a guide who knew the ground well. Amongst the flank parties were distributed a few tin drums in the shape of old kerosine oil tins, which made a good deal of noise. The centre party was under charge of an orderly with a gun, who fired two shots in each drive, or more if necessary to induce a bear to

"move on."* This party was the party of direction, and the centre "directing file" of the party were the drummers led by the guide, who advanced as much as possible straight up the centre line of the beat. The flank parties, under special men of my own, assisted by village headmen, moved 100 to 150 yards to right and left of the drums, the sound of whose beating during the advance enabled the flank parties to keep roughly level with and preserve their intervals from them.

The front to be beaten was generally 300 to 400 yards to start with, narrowing to 200 to 250 yards near my post, and the flank parties gradually closed in on the drums during the beat, to the extent required to keep within the stop lines.

I consider the beating by three collected parties, intelligently directed, the best system in the forest and broken ground generally characteristic of the lower slopes of the Himalayas, where the undergrowth is often very thick, and difficult for men to make their way through, especially on a steep hill side or ravine. Such parties may extend to three or four paces between men, and, since they only cover a limited front, can be more easily directed than a long, greatly extended, continuous line. In fact, satisfactory employment of the latter is impossible in heavy cover. The majority of the beaters are then under no responsible eye, and soon get together in small bodies, moving here and there without plan, leaving large portions of the cover unbeaten, unless expense is no object and three times the number of men that we are considering can be employed.

It may be said that the spaces between the collected parties are also left unbeaten, but at least, with this system, a good direction and fairly level advance can be maintained, and the noise of the shouting, drumming, and firing will probably make a bear think more of moving on than of finding out where to lie low between the parties.

To return to our arrangements. The shikāri having formed the beating line, told the orderly with it—who had a watch—to commence the beat in half an hour, and then with the assistant shikāri posted the stops, each taking one side, and joining me and the orderly carrying my second gun, with a few men as spare stops. We then selected my position. As previously stated, the pine trees do not lend themselves to machāns, nor to shooting from their branches either with or without a ladder. In any case, when you may have a number of beats in a day, all of a speculative character, and have to climb up and down

* I occasionally used bazaar-made bombs, but shots are, on the whole, more effective in my opinion.

hills between each of them, there would not be time to make machāns, and it would be too troublesome to carry about a ladder.

I took my position facing towards the beaters where a certain amount of view was obtainable, if possible, to my front and either hand, and preferably close to or in front of a tree, which rendered me less distinguishable by giving me a dark background. I hardly ever



FIG. 15.

posted myself behind a tree, unless a small one, as it obstructed my view to the front. I always stood up from the commencement to get as good a view as I could and to be ready for instant shooting. The shikāri and orderly sat down or stood, according to circumstances. We all watched in different directions, determined before the beat commenced, and if either of the men saw anything worth drawing my attention to, he did so by touching me or by a low hiss. Our position being selected, the shikāri and his assistant posted the spare men they

had brought as stops, to either hand, commencing a hundred yards or more from me, and connecting on to the stops already posted. The stops near my position (corresponding to "machān stops" in tiger-shooting) had to be so placed that there was no danger of my hitting them when firing, and their exact direction was always pointed out to me. Pine trees being bare of branches for some way up, and therefore difficult to climb, the stops were posted in pairs on the ground, armed with axes or heavy staves, with the shelter of a tree trunk against the rush of a bear. They tapped their trees from the commencement of the beat, and shouted also if they saw a bear, no attempt being ever made to drive a bear quietly, which indeed is very difficult to do in practice. They were at considerable intervals, varying from 150 to 200 yards from the base, to 70 to 100 yards towards my post, for we never had too many men to spare from the beating line. The stops joined in with the beaters when they arrived level with them.

A drive was generally 600 to 700 yards long. Supposing the beating line was formed 700 yards from my post, and the stops began about 200 yards to the front of the flanks of the beating line, there would be some 500 yards on either side up to my position to be stopped. The plan of the usual beat would therefore be roughly as illustrated in the diagram, showing five pairs of stops required on each side, or twenty men altogether; but peculiarities of the ground always interfered with any stereotyped form.

As previously remarked, there will be many disappointing days in beating for black bear. I have often beaten for several days running without success. As examples, however, of what may be expected with fair luck, I give the following abstracts of two shoots in Kashmir, in the first of which I shot with a friend, and in the second by myself.

First day.—First beat, blank; second, a bear killed; third and fourth, blank.

Second day.—First beat, a bear broke to a side; second, blank; third, a bear killed; fourth, blank.

Third day.—First beat, blank; second, a bear killed, and another broke to a side; third, a bear killed, and another broke to a side.

Fourth day.—Five beats, which were all blanks except the fourth, in which it was stated a leopard was seen, but where it went to was not known.

Two guns. Four bears shot for sixteen beats.

The other shoot—

First day.—First beat, blank; second, a bear killed; third, a bear killed; fourth, blank.

Second day.—First beat, a bear broke to a side ; second, a bear broke back ; third, a bear came by my post and was missed ; fourth, a bear killed.

Third day.—Five beats, which were all blank, though the fresh traces of bears in the fields were found.

Fourth day.—First beat, a bear got away to a side just as the beat was commencing ; second, the beaters lost their direction, and a bear broke back, a musk deer came past me ; third, a bear broke to a side.

One gun. Three bears shot for sixteen beats.

The bear killed in the fourth beat of the second day above mentioned, was shot close to camp. The beat, which took place between five and six in the evening, was a long one, covering a larger area than usual, and was in the nature of a forlorn hope to retrieve an unsuccessful day on the way home.

While waiting at my post (only about 150 yards from my tent), I was feeling annoyed at missing the bear in the previous beat. First a fox came slipping by. The beaters had arrived at 100 to 150 yards from us without any sign of a bear being afoot, when a great roar that rose from them showed a bear had been seen. This is always an exciting moment in a beat. You know there is a bear, and if the beaters act vigorously, out it will probably come. They yelled double this time, and the bear came galloping out at a great pace about thirty yards away, making almost straight for me. I dropped it at ten yards off, with a bullet through the base of the neck. "Shabash" said Lassoo as the bear collapsed in a most satisfactory way to see, rolling a yard or two down into a bush—dead. A pretty shot to make up for my previous bad one. It was just as well it was so effective, as the bear was slightly higher on the slope of the hill than we were, and if not stopped dead must almost certainly have come right on to us. The bullet (Westley Richards capped) had made a mess of the bear's neck both in entry and exit. The latter was a hole the size of a saucer, with a place inside the neck into which a man could put his fist.

This finished the day nicely with camp close by.

The best sport I ever had with black bear was in September, 1905, when my wife and I were camped at an elevation of 7200 feet (by the aneroid) in the Yechāra Nullah, whose head branches come down from Tātākooti Mountain, 15,500 feet high, on the Gulmarg—Shopian Range. Densely forested spurs trended down from the snow-covered mountains to the south of camp. To the north we looked over the Vale. It is one of the loveliest parts of Kashmir. We pitched camp

here on the 20th, and I went out on the 21st with sixty beaters. There was good news of bear, the crops nearly everywhere in the neighbourhood showing their depredations. We first tried some covers a couple of miles to the west of camp. These were very likely looking ravines with streams running down their bottoms, and fields of Indian corn between them. In the first beat we became aware of a bear being in it by the extra shots fired by the orderly with the beaters, and their suddenly increased shouting. A fine black bear came almost straight for my post, coming into view through the underwood about twenty yards off. My first shot was a miss, but my left caught him on the back and knocked him over. He got up and made for me. I shot him through the head with the right of my second rifle at six paces distance. There was a sapling between this stout-hearted bear and me, and we found the bullet (soft-nosed) had cut away half the sapling and then entered his head in three fragments. A very good male bear, 5ft. 8in. from nose to root of tail, measured straight between uprights. He was sent to camp tied to a pole for my wife to see, and was a heavy weight for eight men to carry. I was told another bear had broken back in this beat. We then beat a neighbouring ravine, and again became aware by the shots fired and the extra shouting that there was a bear in this beat too. I was looking keenly out for it when a great shouting arose up the east side of the ravine, and we found that the bear had broken to that side, gone across a perfectly bare field, and over the ridge into the next ravine. We beat this as soon as possible but turned out nothing. A fourth beat was also without result, and we then made for camp which we reached about 5 p.m. My wife met me on the way and congratulated me on my successful shikar. The skin pegged out 7ft. 5in.

On the 22nd I was out again in a different direction. I used to leave camp after breakfast about ten o'clock. It was a rainy day. We had four beats, in the last of which there was a bear which broke to a side. We returned to camp about seven o'clock, meeting my wife gathering mushrooms, which formed a very acceptable addition to our bill of fare.

The following morning was again rainy, and I did not leave camp till it seemed to be clearing about eleven o'clock. We beat some low jungle covered spurs to the north and north-east of camp. The first two beats were blanks. It was raining pretty hard a good deal of the time. We used some bazaar made bombs that I had just got up from Srinagar, instead of firing shots. After the second beat we had a long walk to the third, and on reaching the ground I had lunch.

Then the drive commenced. It was a ravine, and standing on one side of it I commanded the bottom and the opposite slope. The line of beaters had arrived, I should say, within a hundred yards of my post when they saw a bear. There was a great hullabaloo. The bear tried to go up the same side of the ravine that I was on, but was turned by the stops with frantic shouts. He then made up the opposite side of the ravine but was turned there in the same manner, so he came on and cantered across an open space on the side opposite me. I was looking at the bottom of the ravine at the time, and when I caught sight of the bear I was too late to get my rifle on him before he disappeared in the jungle. I thought I had lost him, but, diverted from a straight course by the shouts of the stops on that side of the ravine, he came slanting down to the bottom again, crossed it, and came up a gully on my side of the ravine about forty yards from me. I ran towards him and gave him my right at some thirty yards—not a very distinct shot in the darkness of the cover where he was, but I saw him right enough when I fired. At the shot he stopped, and then rolled back down the gully. I ran to the edge of it and saw the bear trying to recover himself a few yards below me. I gave him my left and he rolled further down, but still struggling, so I took my second rifle and finished him with another shot. A fine male bear, as big as the one killed on the 21st. His smallest girth behind the shoulders was 4ft. 5in. When the beaters came up there was tremendous excitement, each man talking or shouting at the top of his voice. This was about half past two. The bear was slung on a pole and carried to camp to the accompaniment of the triumphal beating of the drums. We arrived home by four o'clock. This skin pegged out also 7ft. 5in.

Two of my bullets (cordite '577-90-650, soft nosed) were taken out of the bear. They had mushroomed out to over an inch in diameter without breaking up, and therefore retained all their weight.

It was getting cold then at night, the thermometer registering 35° outside the tent.

The 24th broke fine and clear—a beautiful morning. The mountains on the northern side of the Vale showed up grandly. We beat the spurs to the west of camp. The first drive commenced with the explosion of some bombs, and we stood expectant. We had just seen fresh tracks of the night near a pool. When the line arrived within a hundred yards of me, a sudden increased uproar amongst the beaters and violent drumming indicated a bear was afoot. Then a bear walked out into the open bottom of the ravine about eighty

yards below me to the left. He seemed uncertain how to proceed, stopped, and turned to retrace his steps, when I caught him with my right, and again with my left. He howled and rolled about, and I finished him with my second rifle. While doing so I had left my post and gone a little way towards the bear. That was a mistake. Another bear had just emerged into the bottom of the ravine to the right of my position, and Lassoo was calling to tell me this, but I supposed he was talking about the bear I was finishing off, and only discovered my error when I returned to my post and was told another bear had come out and gone back into the forest again. The bear killed was a male, 5ft long. We went on immediately to arrange a beat for the bear that had gone back. Soon after this drive commenced, the stops to my left (as I stood facing the beat) set up a shouting that showed they were trying to turn a bear that was coming towards them. Then a bear appeared at the bottom of the ravine below my post. As it came up the side of the ravine straight towards me I killed it with a bullet in the forehead at about thirty yards. It rolled back into the stream. A moment or two afterwards a bear raced across a bit of open to my right at about thirty yards, and I gave it my left barrel. This one was immediately followed by another. I seized my second rifle and was throwing it to my shoulder before I remembered I had not put forward the safety catch. By the time I had done this the bear was just disappearing in the jungle, and I could not get on to it in time for a shot. On the beat coming up I went down to the first bear killed and found it was a good male, 5ft. 6in. long. I had told Lassoo to look for a blood trail of the second bear fired at, and while I was measuring the first one he shouted out he had found it dead. It had fallen a short way in the jungle about fifty yards from where it was hit, the bullet going right through behind the shoulders. A female, 4ft. 9in. long. It was now half-past one. We went on to arrange another drive for the bear that had got away, and while the beaters were moving into position I had my lunch. A bear was in this beat—perhaps the one that had got away. It broke back, knocking down a drummer ("dolwallah"). The man saved himself from worse hurt by presenting his drum to the bear. The drum was torn open and the man's leg scratched. We tried two more beats for this bear, in each of which it broke back. We then went right into the middle of the jungle where it was, cleared a space round my position, and beat again. Lassoo pulled me by the sleeve and pointed into a bush five yards in front of me. I could see nothing at first, and then only a black mass for a second. The bear

had come quietly along, seen us from behind this bush, and then as quietly retreated. A minute or so afterwards it appeared about seventy yards below me to my left. The cover there was very dark, and I could not get my rifle well on to it before it had disappeared, again going back. In the meantime the beaters were coming pretty close. I thought I had lost the bear and that it would break back, but it shortly re-appeared about thirty yards to my right front, and I got it with a bullet through behind the shoulders. A male bear, 5ft. 4in. long. So my bag that day was four black bears. The drums beat a triumphal march home, and my wife met us on a ridge some distance from camp. We opened a bottle of Roederer at dinner to celebrate the successful shikar.

Another good day's sport I enjoyed was two years later in the Sooknāg Nullah, which is the next nullah to the west of the Yechāra. I was marching to deer ground in the Khistwar direction, and, arriving at a village near the mouth of the nullah, heard from Lassoo that there were signs of black bear nightly visiting the fields there, and that it might be worth while to try a day's beating. So I camped, ordered fifty beaters, and went out the next morning. It rained up to midday and then turned out fine. We beat the covers on the hill side up the right bank of the Sooknāg stream. In the first drive a fine looking bear came out, going very fast, and only giving me a snap shot which I missed. The second beat was further up in the direction the bear had gone, and he was luckily in this drive. In the first beat he had come racing out close in front of the beaters. This time he appeared while the beaters were still a long way off, walking slowly and evidently on the look out. He emerged about twenty yards from me, and, catching sight of me, stood at gaze; but I had seen him a second or two before he saw me, and already having my rifle up as he stood, fired before he had exactly made me out. He was covered by a bush at the time, over which I could see his head as he looked at me, and I had to judge for the shoulder. At the shot he "spoke," turned, and disappeared, going back the way he had come. I had no time to use my left but felt pretty sure I had hit with my right. However, as there was no blood I kept my position and waited for the beaters to come on, and perhaps drive the bear up to me again. When they had got pretty close—some seventy yards from my post—there was a great hullabaloo amongst them, mingled with the grunts of the bear. We hurried towards the sounds, but on arriving found the bear dead, lying in thick cover stretched straight out on his back. The bullet had hit behind the shoulder. A fine bear, 5ft. 7in. long, and very stoutly

made. It was very satisfactory, getting this bear in the second beat after having missed him in the first. The bear having been skinned and the skin sent to camp, we proceeded to take up position for the third beat. The beaters had arrived within a hundred yards of me probably, when there was an uproar amongst them showing a bear was afoot, and soon I saw, as I looked round the tree I was standing behind, a bear making straight for me. I advanced clear of the tree to get a good view, and shot the bear dead with my right at about ten yards. I then returned to the cover of the tree, as by the continuous din raised by the beaters, there was evidently another bear in the cover, or perhaps more. Then out came, racing across my left front, what I considered a very small bear, not worth firing at, so I let it pass, but Lassoo declared it was as big as the one just killed. In less than a minute, another bear came out, passing to my right about a dozen yards from me. I gave it my right barrel, when it writhed round towards me, "speaking" to the shot, and fell a yard or two further on. In another half a minute I saw a bear for a moment through the jungle to my left front, but I did not see it again, and do not know what became of it. Almost immediately a cub appeared to my right and came within a few yards before it saw us. That was the end of this procession of bears, though my orderly said he saw a sixth—a big one, go away to a side (to our left), and there was probably another cub somewhere, which would make seven bears in this drive. The two killed were females, measuring 4ft. 10in. and 4ft. 9in. The first shot was hit in the centre of the throat, and the second on the shoulder. The former had turned over on its back when dying, and lay stretched out in this position like the big bear. I have several times noticed bears die in this position.

We then had a fourth and last drive in which nothing came out except a musk deer which passed within three yards of me. We returned to camp by 6 p.m.

On one occasion, when I was driving some jungle down by the Rāvi River in Chamba, a bear took refuge in a cave. I had seen it for a few moments as it entered a piece of cover in a ravine below my position. However, it remained there instead of continuing on its way and coming past me as I expected. The beaters closed in, posting themselves so as to drive the bear past me if it broke, and I descended a little to where I could obtain a nearer shot, while stones were thrown into the cover in which the bear had hidden itself. Some of the beaters said the bear had gone into a cave, and pointed it out. Stones were thrown in, but with no result. I then came down

from my position and decided on firing a shot into the cave. The men were averse to my doing this at first, as the shot would have to be fired close to and straight in front of the cave's mouth to be of any use, and right in the bear's path if the shot drew it out, there being high banks on either side of the path leading into the cave, making a sort of channel it would be difficult to get out of quickly. However, I got a couple of men (the local shikāri and another) to stand by me, one on each side, with "lāthis," and fired my right barrel straight into the opening. The report was followed by a succession of angry grunts, and the men with lāthis sprang up to higher ground on one side, calling out the bear was coming. They would not have been of much use to me, therefore, if it had become necessary to have the protection of their lāthis. The smoke (black powder, 500 Express) hung, preventing any clear view to my front, so I followed the example of my escort and, jumping up to one side, saw the bear's head within a couple of paces of me. I gave it the benefit of my left and it rolled back into the cave. When the smoke, which hung about the mouth a good deal, cleared away, the shikāri, peering in, made out the bear lying dead a short distance inside. Pulling it out we found a male bear. The first shot fired on chance into the cave had hit him in the back and drawn him effectually. My second shot entered near the right eye and killed him.

Another time that I shot a bear coming out of a cave was a few years ago in Khistwar. I had pitched my small tent on the flat roof of a shepherd's hut near the head of a nullah. The month was October, so the nullah was quiet, the shepherds having, according to their custom, gone down to lower altitudes in September. One evening we sighted two black bears through the glasses, playing together high up the east hill side, and went to make their closer acquaintance if possible in the afternoon of the next day. We arrived on the part of the hill side where we had seen them, about three o'clock, and soon came across quite fresh traces of bear. Proceeding carefully, one of my men—a fine, active young fellow named Mahomedu—made out a black bear lying down sixty or seventy yards below us. We were near the top of the hill among some large rocks. I got into a position for shooting, but found the bear was nearly covered by a fallen tree, only a small part of its back being visible. I stood up to obtain a better view, and the bear moved, seeming to raise its forepart. I could then see it better, and fired at the partly visible shoulder. At the shot the bear went howling down the hill. It was perhaps a hit or a graze. I fired my left as it bolted through the forest, but feel sure I missed

with that. Taking my second rifle I ran along the top of the rocky sort of buttress we were on, to get another shot if possible. Mahomedu was running on some way in front of me to keep the bear in sight, when I heard a succession of "woof-woofs," and saw another bear pursuing Mahomedu who had suddenly met it among the rocks, and was flying for his life with the bear only a few yards behind him. Before I could fire the bear was nearly between me and Mahomedu, and I might have hit the man. The next instant they both disappeared round a corner of the rocks, the bear seeming almost upon the man. I ran on very much afraid Mahomedu would be caught—the men behind me were raising loud lamentations in anticipation—but in a moment or two was relieved to see him spring up and over some unclimbable-looking rocks all safe. I did not see the bear again. Going on we came to a cave, and heard a great whining and grunting inside it. There were evidently some bears at home. I took up a position by a tree some ten paces from the mouth of the cave. The ground sloped down from me to the mouth, which was half facing me on my left front. Mahomedu, who was no doubt a bit nervous after his narrow escape, begged me not to stay here, saying the bears were a vicious lot and would certainly charge us when they came out, and if I were hurt the "Resident Sahib" would hang him! However, I soothed him and stayed where I was, being quite satisfied with my position. A man was holding the rifle previously fired, and I wished to load it. None of my men could do this for me. I waited a little, and nothing seeming about to come out of the cave, I gave him my loaded rifle and took the empty one to load. While doing so out came a bear. If I had been ready I could have obtained an easy shot: as it was I only managed to get two snap shots at the bear as it went down the hill through the jungle, which I think must both have missed, since we found no blood afterwards, and the bear did not "speak" to the shots. Regarding this, however, I have known bears and tigers "speak" when they were not hit, and make no sound when they were. I reloaded and was then ready with both rifles. The whining and grunting in the cave continued. Two men went up above the cave and threw stones into it through an opening they found. This drew the remaining bears. There was a great grunting. The men above fled as a bear came with a "woof! woof!" up the opening through which the stones had been thrown. Another bear emerged from the entrance I was covering and made straight for me at a gallop, but whether or not he clearly saw me is doubtful. I stopped him at about six paces with a bullet through the back of the neck, and he rolled

down the hill dead. I did not see the bear which went out at the upper entrance. We threw more stones into the cave, but there was not a sound in reply, so I approached the mouth and looked in. Progress or view into it was obstructed by a huge slab of rock partly filling up the entrance, and I could not make out anything. I could have gone in on hands and knees, but if a bear had been there, it would have been an awkward matter in the darkness of the interior. However, no doubt all the bears had left. There must have been three inside; therefore counting the one that pursued Mahomedu, and the one I first fired at, we had got amongst a party of five bears. We took up the tracks of the latter. They led almost straight down the steep hill side, but about 150 yards above the stream in the valley we lost all traces. There was no blood. We looked up and down the stream for some distance without result.



CHAPTER XI.

INDIAN BEAR.

Hindustāni - - - Bhāloo, Reech.

THIS bear, which is generally distributed in suitable localities throughout the Indian Peninsula, except in the north-western portion, is also called the sloth bear, though why that term should be applied to it is not clear, it being as active as any other species of its kind.

In size it runs rather smaller than the Himalayan black bear. Sanderson states that his largest weighed exactly twenty stone. The colour is black, with a greyish white muzzle and V shaped mark on the chest, generally called the horse-shoe. The claws are three to four inches long. The hair is coarser and longer than that of its Himalayan cousin, which is a curious fact, since it lives in a hot climate.

It does not hibernate, there being no winter in the countries where it lives to cause it to do so. During the hot weather it spends much of the day in caves or under the shelter of overhanging rocks, and therefore affects rocky forest-covered hills where such are numerous. I have also found it at this season in the evergreen cover of a river-bed. At other times it may lie up in any retired place, under a tree, in a thicket, or in a cave. It does most of its wandering and feeding at night, but in the rainy season, or in cool, cloudy weather may be come upon in undisturbed parts at any time of the day.

Like the black Himalayan species it is a good tree-climber, and if surprised in a tree will drop down from a considerable height, landing hind feet first, or on all fours. It will also, in the manner of the Himalayan kind, roll down a hill like a ball in an emergency.

Its food consists of insects (ants especially, for which it digs), fruits, berries, honey, and the blossoms of the mhowa tree (*Bassia latifolia*) which flowers in March, April, and May. This is a large

sized tree with oblong leaves about six inches in length and three in width. The flowers are globular, cream coloured, and sweet to the taste. The natives distil a highly intoxicating liquor from them.

The Indian bear, as a rule, avoids the neighbourhood of man, but is occasionally tempted to raid sugar cane fields bordering jungle, and gardens likewise situated containing fruit trees.

Regarding its fondness for honey, like the Himalayan bear it is indifferent to bee stings, and can therefore plunder the nests with impunity. Hicks has a theory on this subject that the bees do not sting bears at all, there being some peculiar odour emanating from these animals that keeps all insects off them.

The female sometimes carries her cubs on her back. Sanderson writes—"It is an amusing sight to see the youngsters dismount at the feeding grounds and scramble up again if anything alarms them. The young are thus carried on occasions until they are several months old, and so large that only one can be accommodated. I once shot a she-bear carrying one young one whilst the other followed through a thicket where it was a wonder the young bear, which was as large as a sheep dog, could keep its seat."

The cubs may stay with their mother till they are three years old. Occasionally quite a family of bears to the number of half a dozen, comprising males, females, and large cubs, are found together, but more frequently only two (a male and a female) or a single bear.

The Indian bear invariably "speaks" loudly if hit, raising prolonged outcries; and, if in company, generally attacks its companion, doubtless under the impression that it inflicted the hurt. Sanderson is of opinion that this is not quite the case, but that the fight is caused by an unwounded bear rushing up (likewise crying out) to find the reason of its companion's grief; and that the wounded one, not being in the best of tempers, attacks its would-be consoler. However, I once distinctly saw a bear, on being hit, turn round and attack another that was simply following it; and many sportsmen have related similar incidents.

Like the rest of the ursine family, the Indian bear's sight and hearing are not first-rate, while his sense of smell is highly developed.

It is a dangerous animal for an unarmed man to meet unexpectedly, and many a native has been killed or received grave injuries when cutting wood or doing other work in the jungle.

It has never been known to kill an animal purposely for food, but Sanderson records a case of the carcass of a barking deer that had been shot by one of his men and left out in the jungle, being eaten in

the night by a bear. As it rained before morning its tracks were plainly imprinted.

The tracks of this species are the same in their general form and aspect as those of the Himalayan black bear. The tracks of all the bear family might be mistaken for those of a bare-footed man, though they are shorter and wider.

Besides tracks, the traces of Indian bear are :—Circular “forms” in grass under trees or in thickets, where bears have rested during the day. Claw marks on trees, and broken branches. Ant nests dug up. Rocks and large stones overturned for beetles and other insects.

Hicks relates he has seen rocks five feet in diameter that have been overturned by bears, and which he doubts could have been moved by ten men. He also instances the native saying, that a bear can drag two maunds (160lb.) for each one of its claws, that is $7\frac{1}{2}$ cwt. with each paw, or three fourths of a ton with both paws. Regarding this authority's estimate of a bear's strength being equal to or greater than that of ten men, there is a singular corroboration of this opinion by Captain Campbell Hardy (in his book “Forest Life in Acadie”), who wrote concerning the North American black bear—which is about the same size as the Indian—“The strength of the bear is really prodigious, fully equal to that of ten men, as was once proved by a tame bear in this province hauling a barrel which had been smeared with molasses, and contained a little oatmeal, away from the united efforts of the number of men mentioned, who held on to a rope passed round the barrel. The bear walked away with it as easily as possible.

A usual method of hunting Indian bear is to find out caves they frequent, and watch at them, either in the very early morning or from say three o'clock in the afternoon till dark. The latter would seem to be the preferable, since if you have the caves observed by men from daybreak, and a bear is seen to go in any of them when returning from its night's perigrinations, you have a bear surely marked down, and can hope to shoot it when it emerges in the afternoon or evening for its nightly feeding, by watching the mouth of that particular cave. Kinloch relates how he killed several bears by adopting this system. If on the other hand you watch a cave from daybreak, it must be more or less a speculative matter, for you cannot be quite certain to what cave a bear will return. The advantage and convenience must also be considered of being able to make your arrangements and take up your position in daylight, instead of getting up in the dark so as to be at your post by earliest dawn.

Bears may be got by beating. There are often low, jungle-covered

ridges, which, with the bottoms between them, offer well-defined covers for driving, and in which, from signs or news received, it is fairly certain there are bears.

Sanderson states that he shot a good many bears round Morlay in Mysore during September and October, when the grass was about two feet high, and the dews heavy, showing a plain trail where a bear had passed, by following them with trackers. In wet or cool weather they seldom ceased feeding before 9 a.m., and if a trail was hit off in the early morning, the bear was generally caught up before it retired for the day. Moreover, even if not overtaken before then, as there were not many caves in that part of the country, a bear was frequently found lying up under the shelter of a rock or bamboo clump.

My first introduction to the Indian bear was in the hot weather many years ago in Chānda when shooting with a friend. We were beating a low jungle-covered ridge, and standing close together where the cover thinned for a space, when a bear came past within five yards of us through underwood, at which we both fired, but it went on leaving a blood trail. We followed up and beat for it again, without success however. Going on after this to take post for another beat, we came upon two more bears and opened a heavy fire on them, bagging one, and the other getting away wounded. We had a further beat for the wounded one but did not see it again.

I was once beating down the bank of a wide river-bed in the same district in the month of April, on speculation. The cool evergreen cover, traversed by water channels, extended for some miles under the bank on which I walked about a hundred yards ahead of the beaters, who were twenty in number, and extended for seventy or eighty yards from the bank. We had been beating nearly an hour like this, when a bear showed suddenly about fifty yards from me on a rise of ground outside the cover. I gave it the right of my '577 Express as it stood facing me. It rolled back down the other side of the rise towards the cover, grunting savagely, then recovering itself scrambled up the slope again in my direction. I thought it was going to charge, but if so it changed its mind on the top of the rise, and turned back towards the cover. I then fired my left at it, but fancy I missed. My gun-carrier marked it down in a patch of cover a short way on, and looking carefully into the place I made out the bear, though indistinctly, and gave it the benefit of the right barrel of my eight-bore at less than twenty yards. This evidently told, by the grunts, struggles, and moans which followed. Then all was quiet. The beaters came on, and arriving

in the vicinity of the bear, shouted and threw stones, sticks, etc., but without any response: so I went into the cover with my second gun-bearer and another man. We found a good deal of blood, but could make out nothing more till I sent a man up the tree under which the bear had been when I fired my last shot. It was then discovered down in a water channel, dead. A female, which I entered in my diary as "about five feet long."

I continued to beat on for another hour or so, and probably drove over three miles of likely river-bed cover altogether without turning out anything besides the bear, except a wild dog, which I missed with the right of the Express as it cantered across an open space, but killed with the left barrel at about eighty yards, as it pulled up to look at us.

Six weeks later on a rainy morning early in June, when hunting for buffalo in Western Baster, near the Indrawatti River, I came across a couple of bears feeding. The whole of this part of the country was forest-covered, with very few villages. I opened fire on the bears with my Express at about a hundred yards, and hit both. They made a great noise, and after a short fight between themselves, bolted in opposite directions, one of them coming my way. I had fired four shots, as far as I remember, and at this moment my rifle was empty. I beckoned for my second rifle (an eight-bore) to the man carrying it, who was with some other men (all aborigines) about a dozen paces back and made no movement to approach me. I therefore ran towards him to get hold of the loaded rifle, conceiving that would be quicker than reloading my empty one: but on my doing this they must have supposed I was running away from the bear, for they all (including my gun-bearer) set off running away from me! To an onlooker it would have seemed as if the bear had put us to entire rout. I was, however, only two or three paces behind my gun-carrier, who was burdened with the heavy eight-bore, and putting on a spurt I caught him up, seized the desired rifle and, turning round, bowled over the bear, which had swerved off and was passing me about fifty yards away. We then followed the blood trail of the other, and while doing so saw another bear. I obtained a shot at its chest at some eighty yards as it stood looking at me. It rolled about with loud cries and limped away. I gave it the left barrel and, taking the eight-bore, ran up close and killed it. When full cocking before firing my last shot, the hammer slipped from my thumb and the rifle went off, driving the top lever of the breech action deep in between the fore-finger and thumb—commonly known as the lock-jaw place. I was able to fire a finishing shot, but then found myself completely crippled so far as shooting was

concerned, not being able to use my right hand for more than a month afterwards, and the wound would have taken much longer than that to heal in so awkward a place if I had not been very "fit" at the time.

I bandaged the hand with my handkerchief and continued on the trail of the wounded bear with a heavy double pistol in my left hand, and riding my pony (the rein looped over the right wrist), with the intention of engaging the bear mounted with the pistol if I came up with it. This, however, I did not do, the blood ceasing and the trail being lost. I had brought this pistol specially with the idea of riding and finishing off wounded buffaloes with it, but I never put the idea into practice. The forest was not suitable for that kind of work, and in any case a carbine or light rifle would have been a much better weapon for such a purpose.

Some years later (1896) I was again in that part of Bastar, buffalo hunting in the rainy season. Between two and three o'clock one day while resting in the jungle and eating a Spartan lunch in the shape of a few "chapattis" (native thin cakes of unleavened bread), one of my men came quickly to me and said some bears were coming our way. I dropped the chapatti I was engaged on, seized my .577 Express, and saw a bear walking along about fifty yards off quite unsuspecting of our presence. I gave it my right: it grunted, turned round, and attacked another bear that now appeared, and at which I fired my left. The bear first fired at then fell and recovered itself, and they both disappeared in some long grass. We followed them up. There was no blood to be seen, but it was raining hard at the time, and the ground soaked and in puddles of water, which might make it difficult to see blood, unless there was a fair amount. This also made the tracking difficult, the heavy rain washing away or blurring the imprints. The men were at fault several times, but always managed to pick up the trail again. We found where one of the bears had lain down twice, and ultimately, after more than an hour's tracking, we came upon them by some rocks. I opened fire, first with the eight-bore and then with the Express. One bear I could see was done for. Then the other charged me, and I killed it with an Express bullet in the chest at about thirty yards. A male and female, 5ft. and 4ft. 9in. long.

CHAPTER XII.

ASIATIC ELEPHANT.

Hindustāni - - Hāthi.

Burmese - - Sin.

MY experience with wild elephant has been confined to Upper Burma. A full-grown Asiatic male elephant stands between $8\frac{1}{2}$ ft. and 10ft. in height (*straight* measure) at the shoulder, but the average height, according to the best authorities, is about 9ft., and that of females rather less than 8ft. Sanderson—a great (if not the greatest) authority—expressed his belief that there was not a 10ft. elephant in India. He used to travel to any part of the country to inspect exceptionally large elephants he had heard of, and under the cold truth of his measurements the reputed 12ft. to 15ft. elephants always shrank to under 10ft. Major Evans, however, in his book “Big Game Shooting in Upper Burma,” records that he shot an enormous elephant in that country, each of whose fore feet measured (by a steel tape) within a fraction of an inch 5ft. 4in. in circumference. Twice the circumference of an elephant’s forefoot, when resting on the ground and enlarged by pressure, gives roughly its height at the shoulder, therefore this elephant, whose foot was measured after death and consequently off the ground, must have been at least 10ft. 8in. high. He fell in such a position that the body measurement could not be taken. The tusks were—the right, length, 6ft. $4\frac{1}{2}$ in.; circumference at gum, $16\frac{1}{4}$ in.; and the weight, $57\frac{1}{2}$ lb. The left, 4ft. $6\frac{1}{2}$ in.— $16\frac{1}{2}$ in.—42lb. The length of a tusk is measured along the outer curve.

Sanderson shot a good number of elephants in India. His largest pair of tusks measured 5ft. and 4ft. 11in. in length; were $16\frac{1}{2}$ in. in circumference at gum, and weighed $74\frac{1}{2}$ lb. the pair.

The record tusk for India, shot by Sir Victor Brooke in 1863,

was 8ft. long, 20'gin. at the greatest circumference, and weighed 90lb. This was the right tusk. The left was diseased and broken.

The record pair for Burma, shot by Mr. Clough, of the Burma Police, in 1896, measured: the right, 7ft. 9 $\frac{3}{4}$ in. long, and 21in. at the greatest circumference. The weight was stated to be 138lb. The left, 8ft. 5 $\frac{1}{2}$ in.—20 $\frac{1}{2}$ in.—142lb.

The great difference in the weights recorded for tusks of about the same size (Sir Victor Brooke's right tusk and either of Mr. Clough's) would indicate some mistake in the weighing of one or the other.

Sanderson writes:—"As a rule, tusks show barely one half of their total length outside the jaw of the living animal. The length within and without the nasal bones is generally exact, but the lip or gum hides a few inches of the projecting half. As the sockets or nasal bones of a large elephant are from 1ft. 6in. to 1ft. 9in. in length, this admits of an elephant's having a tusk 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ ft. long, of which only 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ ft. (the gum hides about 4in.) is visible. This rule holds pretty closely for all elephants until they become aged, when, if the tusks grow abnormally long, which is not always the case, the exposed portion becomes longer than the embedded, as the latter is limited to the length which the nasal bones attain—viz., about 1 $\frac{3}{4}$ ft. in the largest skulls."

If this is so, then it is evident the length of tusks in a full-grown elephant does not as a rule exceed 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ ft., unless he is old or of very exceptional size. The only elephant whose tusks I measured outside the gum agreed exactly with this view. The tusks were 4ft. 3in. and 4ft. 2in. long, and the elephant a big one, rather past his prime, though in no way aged. The Shāns with me estimated his age eighty to ninety years. Sanderson considers an elephant attains its full strength and vigour at thirty-five, and (in a wild state) lives to at least 150 years. The 4ft. 3in. tusk measured 2ft. 2in. outside the gum: then adding (in accordance with Sanderson) four inches for the part hidden by the gum, there remained just 1ft. 9in. for the portion within the bony socket.

On the other hand, I have shot an elephant with tusks quite 4ft. long, which, though a full-grown animal, was certainly not old—in fact, could only have just reached his prime; and another with tusks 3ft. 7 $\frac{1}{2}$ in. and 3ft. 6in. in length, which had not attained his full size, being but 8ft. 3in. in height at the shoulder, and the circumference of the tusks at gum only 9in.

Females have tusks protruding several inches from the gum. A big female (over 8ft. high) I once was obliged to shoot, had tusks coming 5in. to 6in. out of the gum.

Tusks are not shed or renewed, and show almost from birth.

A male elephant without tusks is called a "muckna."* They are said to be generally larger than tuskers. In India and Burma nearly all the males have tusks. Sanderson states that out of fifty-one males he captured in Mysore or Bengal, only five were mucknas. The same authority says that mucknas are ill-treated by the tuskers of a herd; upon whom they cannot retaliate owing to the absence of tusks. Regarding the use of tusks, he writes:—"In a herd of elephants the tuskers maintain the height of discipline. Every individual gives way before them, and in serious fights amongst themselves one or other is frequently killed outright. So great is the dread entertained by all elephants of a tusker, that our staunchest tame females shrank if any of the tame tuskers turned suddenly in their direction. Superiority in a herd appears to attach to the different tuskers in proportion to the size of their tusks; no tusker thinks of serious rivalry with one of heavier calibre than himself."

That tuskers are given way to in a herd I can bear out by my own experience. I heard elephants one forenoon about eleven o'clock in some dense jungle. They were evidently resting during the heat of the day, under which circumstances it is very difficult to approach them in thick cover successfully. The month was April. A Burmese local shikāri with me said he knew a pool not far off where they would probably come to drink in the afternoon. So we went there and waited. About three o'clock we heard the elephants moving. A man on the look out up a tree reported that they were making for the water. About four o'clock a small tusker appeared on the opposite side of the pool, which was some sixty yards across. He walked into the water and drank. After a time more came, females, calves, and a few tuskers, but no big ones. Soon they were all drinking, rolling, and splashing about, and occasionally trumpeting. A jungle scene that lives in the memory. There seemed about thirty elephants altogether. I noticed the manner the tuskers bullied the females, pushing them out of their path, and how the females always gave way at once. I did not get a chance for some time at a tusker that looked worth firing at, but at last one came down into the pool about sixty yards from us, and thrusting aside a couple of females, immersed half his head in the water. He appeared to be the biggest tusker of the lot, and, as some of the elephants were now moving off, I fired at him, aiming between eye and ear, judging for the brain as he

* Also "hine" in Burma.

was half facing me. The bullet did not hit the brain, but it confused and partially stunned the elephant, as he floundered about in the water, allowing me to put five more bullets into him from a couple of double-barrelled eight-bore rifles I was using, and bring him down as he was clambering up the bank. The tusks were poor.

These elephants drank, some by carrying water to their mouths with their trunks, and others by plunging their heads into it.

The wild elephant is generally distributed over Burma, both in the hill tracts and the low country along parts of the Irrawaddi and the larger rivers.

Their food consists of grass, leaves, bamboo shoots, and wild fruits. Tuskers and females unhampered by calves, also raid rice and other cultivation, and are fond of getting into a banana garden when the opportunity offers.

Elephants waste and destroy so much in their feeding, besides what they actually eat (tame elephants require 800lb. of green fodder daily), that a herd of any size cannot remain long in one place—say an area of ten square miles. Nevertheless there are many tracts in Burma of 100 to 200 square miles which always contain elephants—sometimes a large number, and at other times a few. When at Maymyo—the hill station of Upper Burma—I established a hunting headquarter in the Northern Shān State of Mong Long, by building good huts for myself and followers and shelters for my ponies and other animals, near a small village on the border of a considerable jungle tract, of which an area of at least 200 square miles to the north contained no human habitation; and to all sides the forests were extensive and sparsely inhabited. Mong Long State was administered by its Native Chief, and had no European living in it either officially or non-officially.

The village near which I established myself had only been in existence a year, and neither it nor the tract of country I hunted had (according to the villagers) ever been previously visited by a white man.

I finished building the huts by the middle of March, and from that time to the end of August made several trips of a few weeks' duration to them from Maymyo. My camp equipment, a good deal of my stores, and other necessities, were kept in the huts, so that I could travel backwards and forwards between them and Maymyo marching "light." As far as the huts I could transport things in bullock carts, but beyond them to the north I was obliged to use carriers, the heavy jungles, traversed only by game paths, being generally impassable for

even loaded pack animals. It was very hilly, in fact mountainous in parts. My huts must have been at an elevation of not less than 4000 feet, and some of the hilltops about were certainly 1500 feet higher. A small river, formed by two head streams that joined three or four miles to the north of the village, flowed through the tract from south to north. The beauty of the scenery along its banks cannot be rendered in words. The bed was generally stony and rocky, the rocks often showing above the water, which in the rapid parts seethed against them. Deep, quiet pools occurred in the winding river, surrounded by a tangle of luxurious vegetation, and overshadowed by giant trees through whose branches showed the forest clad hills around. It was Nature at her wildest—the forest as it had existed from remote ages.

The only paths were made by wild animals—the elephant chiefly. These elephant paths when going up and down the steep hillsides, zigzagged as scientifically as if their course had been planned by engineers. Old traces of elephant were frequently met with—devastated and broken bamboo clumps,* torn branches, masses of dung, the deep circular holes made by their great feet in muddy bottoms and since caked hard; occasionally fresher tracks with the holes still soft or filled with water, freshly broken bamboos, and fresh dung. Or perhaps elephants would be heard—their trumpeting and their crashing through the jungle, the breaking of branches, and the snapping of the bamboos sounding like pistol shots as they fed.

A common sound in these forests was the curious cry of the Gibbon monkey, sounding over the hills and valleys, something like "hoo-oo! hoo-oo! hoo-oo!" kept up for half a minute or more by a number of monkeys together.

Bison tracks would occasionally be found, but none of the animals seen unless specially followed up. It was strange how seldom deer of any kind were seen or heard. The most likely animals to come upon, in fact, were elephants. Following them in this country was pretty hard work. Apart from steep, heavily forested hill sides to get up and down, the river or its branch streams had often to be crossed. The rocky parts of their beds were sometimes too difficult for a ridden pony, and had to be waded at a fordable point, perhaps through waist-deep water. There were also muddy bottoms to cross, impossible to ride over, in parts of which you might sink knee-deep at every step, with generally the added impediment of thick, high

* I have seen areas of several square miles in extent so devastated.

grass to struggle with. Or an old muddy stretch might be come upon, dried up but full of deep holes caused by elephants having passed over it when it was soft, and offering an obstacle to progress like military *tuns-de-loup*.

In the several visits I made to my huts I invariably found elephants in the neighbourhood, perhaps not during the first day's hunting, nor the second, but always after persevering for a few days. They would often, however, be only small tuskers and females. Sometimes I came on tracks of the night within two miles of the huts. I shot a few tuskers during the five months in which I made my shooting excursions, though only one good one, a fine solitary elephant. But, as I have said, elephants were always somewhere about in this particular tract I hunted, and the villagers (amongst whom I obtained my trackers and shooting-carriers) told me that they were to be found within ten miles in one direction or another pretty well throughout the year.

Elephants rest, as a rule, in some thick cover during the day, from about ten o'clock to three. They then get on the move again, making their way slowly to water for their afternoon drink, and continue to feed and wander, with occasional spells of rest, through the night. When day breaks they make for water, and then head slowly for the cover wherein they intend to pass the heat of the day, which they do standing and dozing, or lying down on their side and sleeping.

These movements during the twenty-four hours are those followed generally by all the heavy game, such as elephant, rhinoceros, bison, and buffalo. The only difference in their general habits is that elephant and (less often) buffalo may be found near villages, and raiding cultivation at night, which bison and rhinoceros practically never do, both shunning the vicinity of man and all his works.

Colonel Pollok in "Wild Sports of Burma and Assam" writes—"Elephants when asleep often snore: they are very human-like in many of their ways; for instance, I have seen them use a foot as a pillow on which to rest their head. They get a piece of wood and use it as a toothpick, they will plug a wound with clay, they scratch themselves with the tip of their trunk, or if they cannot reach the irritable part with that, they take up a branch and use it."

Herd of elephants number usually from twenty to fifty, but I have heard of much larger ones from sportsmen who have seen them. A herd of any size breaks up into detachments while feeding, but on an alarm, closes up, and then moves rapidly off. The alarm is said by most hunters to be communicated by a short trumpet, and no doubt often is so, but though I have frequently alarmed a herd, either by their

hearing or winding me, I have rarely heard a trumpet on those occasions. They have generally moved off, either silently without my knowing it till I discovered it by their absence and their tracks, or with a sudden stampede and loud crashing through the jungle, but without trumpeting. Even when their first warning of danger has been the report of my rifle, I have not known them trumpet, nor even then invariably stampede. They have usually first collected in rather a deliberate manner (some of the herd perhaps scenting round with elevated trunks to catch the enemy's wind), and then made off in a body at a quick walk. They seem at times not to be able to locate the sound of the shot, as I have known them after assembling to come in a direction rather towards me than away from me, with the wounded one, if able to travel, surrounded by the others, thereby protecting it from further fire. Burmans have told me they have seen wounded elephants being actually helped along by others on either side. I once saw a small herd of about a dozen, that was passing me with a wounded tusker in the middle, stop and remain by him when he dropped, for a minute or so, and then not being able to move him, proceed on their way, all except a female which stayed with him, and which I ultimately was obliged to shoot.

On one occasion I killed a tusker early in the morning that was a few hundred yards from a herd. At the shot the latter stampeded noisily through the thick "kaing" grass in which they were. After examining the slain one I had returned to the village (about three miles distant) where I was staying, and sent men to cut out the tusks. They were accompanied by most of the inhabitants to bring away the meat, which is always a windfall for the neighbourhood generally. They did not return till late that night, and informed me they had not been able to go up to the dead elephant for a long time, owing to a female which mounted guard over it, and would not be driven away till they had fired the grass around.

A herd when changing its ground (that is, travelling without feeding) moves in single file, headed by a female. The larger tuskers, though keeping in the vicinity of a herd, are often to be found singly at some distance from it, and during movements may take a line of their own. If with the herd, they will be generally in the rear of it. On becoming aged, they usually live a solitary life; and these are the ones which will give the hunter the finest tusks.

Sanderson states that detachments of a large herd may be very widely separated during feeding, and that they keep touch with the movements of the main body by their wonderful sense of smell, which

enables them to wind each other at considerable distances. This authority on elephants states that he has known his tame elephants wind wild ones at a distance of three miles, when the wind was favourable. This seems extraordinary, but doubtless their sense of smell is very highly developed. I have seen a wild elephant come up to a path on which my party had been walking ten minutes before, stop dead on reaching it, wheel round, and rush back trumpeting. The wind was favourable with regard to ourselves, so the elephant could not have winded us, but only our scent in the path on which we had been walking. Major Evans is of opinion that an elephant will wind a man at a distance of at least half a mile.

Their hearing is fairly good. I have more than once known a herd put on the alert by hearing my movements in thick, dry jungle, where it is impossible to move noiselessly, however carefully you may go.

Their sight is poor. A man may approach them closely when in their line of view, if he moves slowly, especially, it is said, if he can manage to approach an elephant directly from its front, the animal not being able to see an object so placed as well as in an oblique line. Any quick movement or action will, however, be instantly observed. Several such cases have occurred to me. I will relate two of them.

I was watching some female elephants that had filed past me and were feeding within thirty yards, in hopes of a tusker following. Jaggat Singh (previously mentioned in my tiger shooting) carried my second rifle. We were only partially concealed by a small tree and some thin bushes. A tusker hove in sight, but he was not big, and I wanted to wait in case a better one came up. Jaggat Singh supposed I had not noticed the tusker, and pointed towards it with a sudden movement of his hand. Two females that were half facing us about twenty yards off, caught the movement, raised their trunks in our direction, and advanced a few steps towards us. The wind being right they could not scent us, but were evidently bent on further investigation; so, seeing we must be discovered in a few moments, and not wishing to let the females come too close to us, I fired at the tusker, which otherwise I should not have done, as he was not favourably placed for a shot and I was waiting in hopes of a larger one appearing. On my firing all the elephants bolted. We followed up the tusker for hours until the blood trail ceased and we lost the tracks on hard ground.

Another time, again with Jaggat Singh as second gun-carrier, I was quite close to some elephants we had been following for a long way. Several of them, amongst which was a tusker, were moving

very slowly less than twenty yards from me, but in thick jungle, and I could make out nothing to fire at with any certainty of an effective result. In a few yards, if continuing their course, they would have come out into thinner jungle where I might have put in a good shot. I was waiting for this, standing stock still, in the rather open bed of a small nullah. Jaggat Singh, instead of following my example and remaining motionless, stooped to obtain a view of the elephants. His movement attracted their attention, for they all stood quite still at once, and after a few moments turned and walked noiselessly away. The alarm was communicated in some manner to the herd, which was feeding in scattered detachments, as we found afterwards that every elephant had gone. We came up to the herd some hours later, but never saw the tusker again.

Now, in acting as he did, Jaggat Singh broke a well recognised rule of big game shooting, that I had often tried to instil into him, viz., to copy your leader's movements exactly—crouching when he crouches, remaining motionless (whatever the position) when he does, and in short acting in every way the same. Jaggat Singh though, as I have said, a very good tiger-shikāri, was quite unsuited by his temperament to be a gun-carrier in heavy game shooting. He could not control himself, and was constantly fidgeting to point out something he thought you did not see, or to get some special view for himself. But really the best of gun-carriers often give you away, or put you out; and though I have generally approached game with one so as to have a second rifle handy (and with an orderly gun-carrier to get my empty rifle loaded at the same time), I question if it would not be better to discard gunbearers on arriving within reach of game, and approach it alone, accepting the disadvantage of having only one rifle. This would be partly remedied by using a magazine rifle, if you considered the increased number of shots without reloading compensated for its disadvantages as compared with a double.

Where the gun-carrier may undoubtedly come in useful, if a trusty man, is when following up wounded animals.

The track of the forefoot of a full-grown elephant forms a rough circle with a general diameter of fourteen to twenty inches, according to the sex of the animal. A male's will be generally from sixteen to twenty, and a female's from fourteen to sixteen. I say *general* diameter because (not being a perfect circle) measurements taken over the centre of the track from different points of its edge will vary slightly. Anything over eighteen inches, measured across the *width* of the track, indicates a big elephant, and if the impression of the two

front toes is distinct it indicates heavy tusks. Usually, however, the toe impressions are scarcely observable, even of big tuskers.

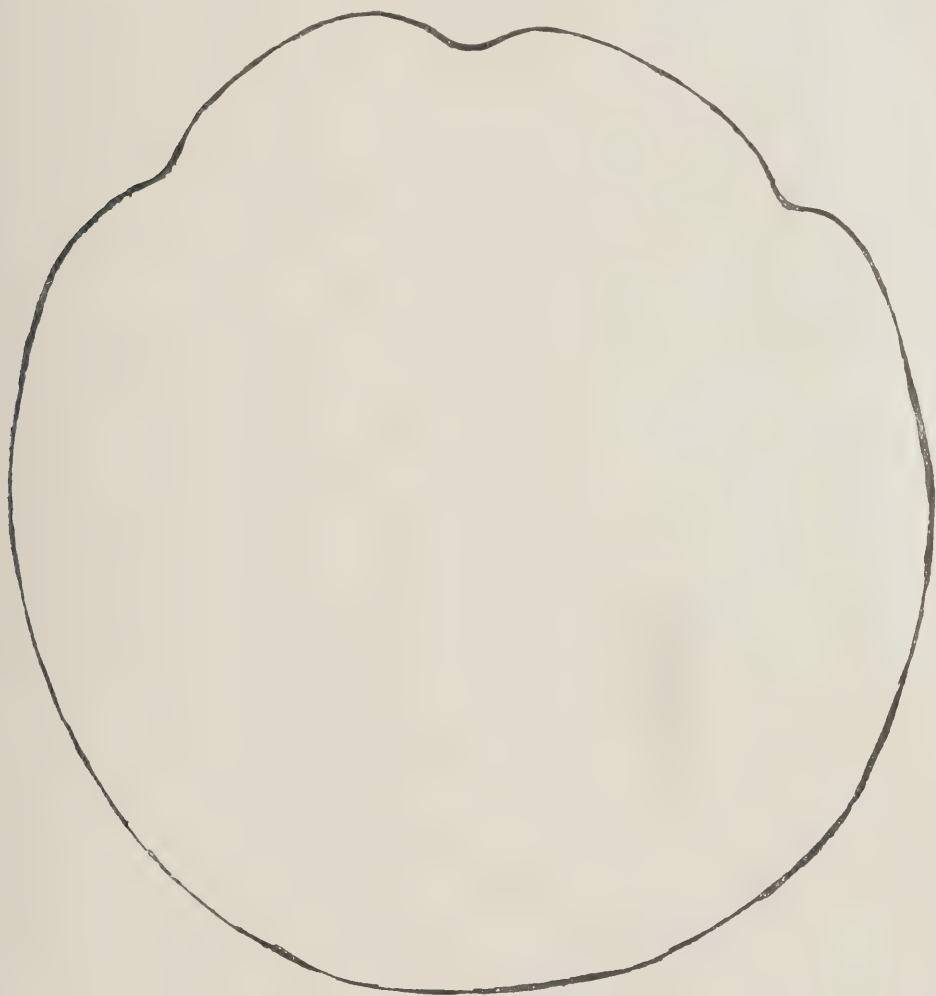


FIG. 16.

The form of an average sized male elephant's forefoot track, if clearly imprinted with the two front toe impressions, is as shown in the illustration (about a quarter size).

The fore foot is larger and rounder than the hind, whose form is more an oval than a circle.

Elephants are considered to live to about 150 years. Sanderson states that females usually gives birth to their first calf at sixteen, when they are palpably immature themselves, and that mahouts believe they breed up to eighty years of age. Also, that when a calf is born the herd remains with the mother two days, after which time the new comer is capable of marching.

A calf is able to walk a little distance within a few hours of its birth. When out after elephants one day in the month of June, I heard the stomachic rumbling they often make, and guided by it approached to within seventy yards of two females. My gunbearer, who climbed up a tree, said there was quite a small calf with them. While watching them the wind changed, and other elephants that we had not seen went off. The two females and the young one moved away very slowly and came to a halt again a few hundred yards further on, with—my man said—the calf between them. I could not make out the calf, and did not like to approach very near, as that would have been certain to provoke a charge, when I should have been obliged to shoot in self-defence. Going to the place where they had been standing when we first saw them, we found the ground splashed with blood and other signs of the birth of the calf, which must have taken place that morning. One female had stayed to help the mother, and even after they had winded us, and the rest of the herd had gone away in alarm, would not desert her. Nor would the mother leave her little one. It was a case of real devotion and staunch friendship, as elephants are more alarmed by winding human beings than by seeing them. The herd to which these two females belonged had evidently been thoroughly put out, for we followed their trail from midday till four o'clock, probably covering six or seven miles, without coming up to them (the herd taking a straight line without stopping to feed anywhere), when we gave it up in order to reach home by night.

The period of gestation is said to be twenty to twenty-two months. One calf is born at a birth, and several calves of different ages may be seen with their mother.

It has been noted as a curious fact, for which no reasonable explanation can be given, that remains of elephants which die a natural death are very rarely found in the jungles. Sanderson writes—"Not only have I never myself seen the remains of any elephant that died a natural death, but I have never met any one amongst the jungle tribes or professional elephant hunters who had seen a carcass,

except at a time when murrain visited the Chittagong and Kākankoté forests. Bones would not decay for some years, and teeth and tusks would survive for some time, yet not a single pair of ivories has ever, as far as I know, been found in the Mysore jungles during the time I have known them." Colonel Pollok says—"I was not only a sportsman but an engineer employed in opening up countries little known; for this purpose I had hundreds of men employed in cutting tracks through the enormous savannahs of Assam and Burma—countries where wild elephants are probably more numerous than in Ceylon or Southern India. I had to traverse these at all seasons, even in the rains; if I could not go by elephants I had to go by boat. I had to burn these jungles yearly—in all for over twenty-one years. Yet I have never come across the body of an elephant that died a natural death, though I have seen hundreds of carcasses of deer, gaur, gayal, buffalo, and tsine, lying dead—and also the remains of elephants killed by either myself or others." Regarding the length of time remains may last, Colonel Pollok instances the case of a large muckna elephant shot in Assam, whose remains were to be seen for about eight years, although killed far from all civilisation and subject to inundation in the rains, and fire in the hot weather.

Sir Emerson Tennent, in his work "The Wild Elephant," gives evidence to the same effect—from both European and native opinion.

I once came across a few bones (plainly those of an elephant) in the Mong Long jungles. The men with me knew, or pretended to know, nothing concerning the cause of its death.

Elephants are excellent swimmers. Sanderson writes—"In swimming, very young calves are supported by their mothers' trunks, and held in front of them. When they are a few months old they scramble on to their mothers' shoulders, helping themselves by holding on with their legs, or they swim alone." He relates a case in which a batch of seventy-nine full-grown elephants that he despatched from Dacca to Barrackpore near Calcutta, had to swim the Ganges and several of its tidal branches. The month was November when the rivers are full after the rainy season. They were six hours without touching bottom in the longest swim, and not one was lost.

The pace of the elephant is a walk which may be increased to a fast shuffle. It moves least easily down hill, so if a man is pursued his best chance is to run or dodge down hill if possible: but the kind of ground on which elephants are generally found makes running hopeless.

They cannot trot or gallop, neither can they jump nor make any

kind of spring, though they are able to scramble up and down steep slopes and in and out of most nullahs. A steep-cut ditch or trench 8ft. wide is said to be beyond an elephant's stride, and therefore impassable for it. Trenches of this kind from 10ft. to 12ft. wide may be seen round lonely rest houses in forest reserves, built for the convenience of forest officers, since elephants are mischievous and destructive animals, and would damage or even break them down unless they were so protected. This destructive and aggressive disposition leads elephants at times to tear down telegraph lines and posts along railways, fences, and huts, strike terror into small villages, and even make matters uncomfortable in the camps of the sportsman or official. In parts where they are numerous, travellers by jungle roads, both European and native, have occasional startling experiences. Stories without number might be told of roads "held up" for days, all traffic stopped, and men and animals killed by rogue elephants as they are termed. But as a matter of fact most big tuskers are more or less rogues, in the respect that it would be at all times unsafe for an unarmed man to meet them. And herds, even when engaged in the peaceable occupation of feeding, are given a wide berth by travellers of every description.

An elephant kills a man (or an animal) by treading or kneeling on him with his forelegs, and by driving his tusks into him. Sometimes he will tear his enemy to pieces by grasping each limb in succession with his trunk or his mouth and tearing it off, while he keeps the body fixed firmly under his heavy foot or knee. Not long ago, an elephant was seen to tear a native girl to pieces by means of his trunk and fore foot; and the dismembered bodies of men have been recovered on several occasions of late years by rescue parties called to the scene by companions who escaped. An elephant in the Mandla District of the Central Provinces (in the seventies) which killed a great number of people before it was shot, sometimes tore its victims to pieces with its mouth and eat portions of their flesh, according to eye witnesses who had taken refuge in trees.

The sufferers have generally been villagers (men, women, and children) attacked without provocation as they proceeded along a forest road, or were engaged in some work in the jungle.

It is not often that high officials or other personages have narrow escapes from elephants, the unpleasant experiences, injuries, and loss to life and property falling on humbler folk: otherwise the ardour displayed in the preservation of these animals might be cooled. But such a case occurred a few years ago, when one of the principal officials

in Southern India was riding on tour with his staff along a forest track in Coorg. From what I could gather from the accounts in the Indian press the circumstances were as follows. An elephant was heard proceeding parallel with the party. The Commissioner sent one of his companions (a police officer) forward a short distance to where the path turned, to see if the road was clear. The officer on arriving at the turning was immediately charged by a tusker, which was standing on the path. He wheeled his pony about and galloped back with the elephant trumpeting in hot pursuit! Seeing this sudden apparition bearing down on them, the rest of the party did the same as the policeman—went about and rode for their lives. Unluckily for the Commissioner he became the hindmost of the fugitives, and, finding the elephant close upon him, turned his pony off the track into an opening in the jungle, in hopes of shaking off his pursuer. But the tusker turned after him, and the clearing was soon closed up by the jungle, which impeded his pony's progress; so, seeing himself on the point of being overtaken, the rider, with great skill and resource, threw himself off into the thickening cover and managed to hide in it, while the elephant went on after the pony. The hero of this adventure—fortunately unhurt by his feat—got as quickly as possible behind the nearest tree of sufficient size, and might well have considered his troubles over. But no—back came the persistent enemy in less than a minute, having apparently discovered the adroit trick played on him, and wanting the man and not the pony, for he searched about, quartering the ground and feeling the wind in all directions with his trunk, without, mercifully, catching the taint he sought, and at length made off, to what must have been the intense relief of the hidden Commissioner, who had meanwhile been shifting his position according to the movements of the elephant, so as to keep the tree between himself and his would-be destroyer. To such straits had a high official been reduced! On his companions returning to “pick up the pieces,” they were met instead by their chief—whole and sound, who “turned up smiling.”

When I was shooting in the Kathā District in Burma in 1898 (which was before the act for the preservation of elephants in that country had been passed) the locality I hunted was terrorised by elephants. They used to come close to the villages at night (I have seen their tracks within fifty yards of houses), and inflict immense damage on the cultivation. The people were afraid to enter the jungle or to travel from one village to another except in large parties. I killed several tuskers in a short time and relieved the neighbourhood

temporarily of its incubus, besides supplying it with plenty of meat (much appreciated by the inhabitants), the elephants clearing out in a week or so from that locality—by which I mean an area of about 100 square miles. I should have done much better than I did if I had had any previous experience in elephant shooting.

Ten years later, when in the Mandalay District, Forest Officers told me that wild elephants were a pest in the reserved forests, interfering with operations therein by worrying the tame ones, and making the forests unsafe for the Department's employees. At the suggestion of a forest officer, who hoped I should be allowed to shoot some of the elephants troubling his own forest, I applied to the Commissioner for leave to shoot a tusker or two, mentioning the opinion of the officer on the subject, but was refused with the information that it was against the Government's policy to allow elephants to be shot. I then had to seek for territory not administered by British officials, in order to shoot elephants.

Complaints are now constantly made in Southern India to the authorities, by the planters and other cultivators, of the depredations of elephants, and the advisability urged of making the restrictions on shooting them less stringent.

There is some extraordinary sentiment regarding elephants that causes them to be thus strictly preserved, when their numbers are so increasing as to make them a plague and a danger to the inhabitants of the country. Government does not require for its tame establishment one in a hundred of these numerous wild elephants. Nor do the Native States, such as Travancore, whose ruler turns a deaf ear to the petitions of European planters to have some measures introduced to diminish the numbers of the wild herds.

Previous to the preservation enactment in the seventies, a reward was given in Southern India by the local governments for each elephant killed. This was no doubt wrong, and led to a great decrease in the numbers of elephants through natives making the killing of them a means of livelihood. But in abolishing the reward Government went to the other extreme, and introduced the strictest preservation. Burma followed this example by bringing in a Preservation Act a good many years later (in 1900 I think), though, as I have stated, elephants were a plague in some parts of the country. This plague will now continue to increase until some revision of the Preservation Acts will become absolutely necessary.

CHAPTER XIII.

ASIATIC ELEPHANT.

SHOOTING METHODS AND EXPERIENCES.

THE method of elephant shooting is to find tracks fresh enough to be worth taking on, and to follow them till you come up with the game. This applies to all other heavy game.

In the case of elephants, you may be further guided by the noise they often make in feeding, or their occasional trumpeting and rumblings, even when at rest. Shooting in April in the Kathā District, I found elephants almost solely by hearing them, my men not being able generally to track on the then hard ground, though occasional signs might help us as to which direction to take. But elephants were numerous there. As a rule it is no use hunting if your men are not able to track.

Most authorities agree that elephant shooting, if fairly and regularly carried on, is more dangerous than any other kind of big game hunting. It is certainly very hard and exciting work to follow and slay the mighty beast in his own forest domains. The impressive size and bearing of the game, the idea of power it conveys, both in its appearance and in the loud noises made when moving and feeding, or in a stampede when a herd rushes along like an avalanche through the jungle, conduce to this excitement.

I have never been charged by an elephant. Sanderson's description of the charge is worth quoting. He says—"The wild elephant's attack is one of the noblest sights of the chase. A grander animated object than a wild elephant in full charge can hardly be imagined. The cocked ears and broad forehead present an immense frontage; the head is held high, with the trunk curled between the tusks to be uncoiled in the moment of attack; the massive forelegs come down with the force and regularity of ponderous machinery; and the whole

figure is rapidly foreshortened, and appears to double in size with each advancing stride. The trunk being curled and unable to emit any sound, the attack is made in silence, after the usual premonitory shriek, which adds to its impressiveness."

The best season in Burma and India for heavy game shooting is from the latter part of May till the middle of July: during the first part of the rainy season, in fact, before the rain has become too continuous and the jungle too dense. At this time of the year there may be many days in succession, cool and cloudy with light rain, or only occasional showers, softening the ground and the strewn leaves, making quiet movement possible and tracking generally easy, and therefore forming perfect shooting weather.

In hunting elephants or the other kinds of heavy game, it is as well to make up your mind before starting as to whether or no you wish to be prepared to sleep out in the jungle if necessary. For if you do, more impedimenta (requiring more men) must of course be taken—such as sufficient blankets, a waterpooft sheet or valise, a sleeping suit, a towel, change of underclothing, spare pair of socks and boots (for everything you wear during the day will have become soaked from one cause or another), and extra rations, in addition to the things ordinarily taken only for the day, which in my case consisted of a water bottle, a tiffin tin, and a large waterproof shooting bag (with shoulder strap) containing a light waterproof "slip on," a flask of brandy, a field dressing, measuring tape, skinning knives, compass, extra cartridges, etc. My tiffin tin was an old biscuit box, divided by sheets of tin into three compartments, carried in a leather cover fastening with buckle and strap, and furnished with a shoulder strap. The tin lid made a good plate, and besides the food, I put in it a small folding knife, fork, and spoon, a little metal salt holder, and a couple of the smallest sized Liebig's extract jars with their corks, for holding butter, jam, or other condiment.

The gunbearers' extra things also have to be carried, as they should be unencumbered beyond a rifle.

To be prepared for sleeping out is no doubt the right way to follow the heavy game. The feeling that you can remain out if necessary is very satisfactory when you are tracking either wounded or unwounded animals. You know it will not be easy for them to shake you off, as you need not give up following in order to get home by night. Your jungle men, with their axes or dāhs, will soon run you up a shelter against rain and dew when necessary. The forest supplies all the required materials.

An objection to sleeping out in the jungles during the rains is undoubtedly the liability to malarial fever (the great game-preserver) from so doing. To guard against this, quinine should be taken regularly. I have found fifteen grains taken twice a week fairly effective. I am no advocate of alcohol, but I will give Kinloch's recipe against fever in his own words, though he does not state the amount of quinine. He writes:—"Early in September of the same year, I disregarded all warnings about jungle fever, and set out to have another try for elephants in the Sewālikhs. I took the precaution of swallowing a glass of sherry with a good dose of quinine every morning when I got out of bed, and I never had a touch of fever."

An early morning start should be made, for if lucky enough to find fresh tracks, the earlier in the day they are found the better, since it is an advantage to come up to elephants (or other game) before they have settled down for their midday rest. Animals are more likely to see or hear you when they are resting than when on the move or feeding. It is especially important to approach elephants when they are feeding, on account of the noise they usually make covering any sound of your own approach.

When you come upon big enough tracks that are palpably not too old to investigate, the first question to decide is their age. If a fall of rain has occurred the previous evening or during the night, not followed by further rain, it will be a great assistance in deciding the point, as it will usually be evident whether the track was made before or after the fall. I have always deferred to the opinion of the jungle men with regard to the age of the tracks. The civilised man can rarely compete with the aboriginal man in this respect, nor in the art of tracking. Even tracks pronounced of the previous forenoon are worth taking up for a mile to see what they look like then, and the state of any dung that may be come upon, which will always be a great aid in judging the age or freshness of tracks. If they are still considered of the previous forenoon they may be dropped and later ones worked for, but it is often wonderful how quickly tracks become fresh. The reason of this is that elephants (more so than other heavy game) move very slowly while feeding—not more than half a mile an hour, and often considerably less, according to my own experience, and that they halt and rest occasionally for a few hours. Your rate of tracking will probably be about two miles an hour if the state of the ground is favourable. If difficult, it might be only a mile an hour, but it would in most cases average at least one mile and a half, taking the good with the bad, unless, as sometimes happens, much time is lost

in unravelling the wanderings and loiterings of feeding elephants, or the track of a single one you wish to hold on to, from others it has become mixed up with. So tracks though pronounced, say, of the previous afternoon, if found by ten o'clock in the morning, may be followed with a fair chance of coming up to the elephants during the day.

The order of march I generally adopted when tracking in Mong Long, before the tracks became very fresh, was as follows, there being about twenty-five yards distance between the men or parties named:—

The tracker (or trackers)—the interpreter (a pensioned Goorkha soldier settled in Burma)—a gunbearer—a gunbearer—shooting-carrier—the syce (ponykeeper)—myself (riding when possible) with a shooting-carrier.

By this means the pony was kept well to the rear, and in hot weather I saved myself as much walking as I could, though it was often impossible to ride, and even very difficult at times to get an unriden pony along in the jungle-covered hills. If the weather is cool or you are fit enough to walk all day when it is hot, it is of course better to walk with the trackers and leave the pony at home. You then move less encumbered, avoid the chance of any sound made by the pony, giving warning to game, and are always ready for anything.

With the idea of being more independent of men, who are sometimes difficult to engage, I once tried a pack pony for carrying things required by the party when prepared to sleep out, and found that in whatever manner I arranged the small load, it was too wide to admit of the pony getting through the denser parts of the jungle. If only out for the day I found two carriers sufficient, one to carry my own things, and one those of the gunbearers. If going prepared to sleep out, four carriers were necessary, and in that case the little column could be further lengthened, so as to place the pony a greater distance to the rear. I could halt everyone at any time by a low whistle and signal, which was passed forward till it reached the tracker. On tracks becoming very fresh, the information was passed back to me by signal, and I went forward—carrying a rifle—to join the tracker (or trackers) with one of the gunbearers, the syce taking charge of the pony accompanied by the rear shooting-carrier. This was necessary, as the syce not knowing the jungles, in case he got into difficulties with the pony and temporarily lost sight of the next party in front, required a jungle man to help him. The column or chain would then be shortened by two links, or closed up by fifty yards,

but the pony would still be about a hundred yards in rear of the leading party, composed of the tracker, myself, and a gun-carrier. The short distance of twenty to thirty yards between the connecting links of the chain was necessary in the thick jungle occasionally passed through, in order that the men might keep in sight of each other, though even if from any reason they did lose view, it was usually easy for them by following the trail of those in front (and sometimes by listening) to soon catch them up again.

If the wind is on your back it is useless following very fresh tracks. The only thing to do is to judge the probable line of the game (elephants usually head in one general direction), and endeavour by a wide movement forward to come in on their head or flank.

On elephants being heard not far off, or seen, or quite fresh signs (such as hot dung) come upon, the signal would be passed back to halt, while I (after taking the wind) pushed on with the tracker, the interpreter, and a gunbearer. The best way to take the wind is to strike a match and blow it out, when the smoke will show the direction of the slightest stir in the air.

After appreciating the situation by a closer approach, I went forward either alone or accompanied by a gunbearer. If I was unsuccessful in obtaining a shot, owing to the elephants moving on too fast or to their taking alarm, the men in rear were called up, the order of march re-formed, and the tracking resumed.

This order of march and method I have generally adopted in principle when following all kinds of heavy game.

Approaching a herd of elephants to find a good tusker is very difficult work. You have to be constantly considering the wind. You may come on females with young unexpectedly, or find them, and other elephants not worth shooting, bearing down on you, and being perhaps unable to get out of their way in time, may be charged. In any case, if you are discovered the alarm will be given. It is said an elephant suddenly finding itself in the presence of a man, is more likely to attack him than any other animal would be. The best herd tuskers are often by themselves, a quarter to half a mile from the main body. If you can so find them, it will be an advantage in having only a single animal to deal with. When with the herd the good tuskers are generally with the rear detachments. You will be guided in your movements as much by what you hear as by what you see. The chances are if you are not fairly quick in finding and shooting a good tusker, you will soon be winded or stumbled on by some of the animals, and the whole herd alarmed. Elephants are not

so easy to see in thick forest as might be supposed from their size. The dark shadows cast in such jungle accord with their colour (as with that of all heavy game), and may hide them, though within thirty yards, unless you catch the movement of their ears or tails, which are hardly ever at rest, and which indeed generally give you your first information. The part of the head or body where you wish to plant your bullet will frequently be hidden by grass or branches in the most aggravating manner.

Before firing it is as well to have a substantial tree or bamboo clump handy, behind which to retreat if necessary after your shot. In case of a stampede the herd may otherwise run over you. I have never experienced this danger though stampeding herds have passed me thirty or forty yards away. It is one, however, to take into account.

The most awkward cover in Burma in which to approach elephants is the thick stemmed "kaing" grass—a dense growth, 10ft. to 15ft. high. You cannot move in it quietly, you cannot run a yard without being tripped up in the tangle round your feet, and you cannot see an elephant in it sometimes when within but half a dozen paces, though you can hear it to any extent—the noise made by the huge animals in feeding and forcing their way through this kind of cover being alarmingly loud, and covering any noise made by yourself in struggling through it. It is a risky matter hunting in grass like this, for there is usually nothing to break an elephant's charge or rush, such as a tree; and while you are bound fast, so to speak, amongst the thick stems and undergrowth, an elephant can go through it easily.

It is, of course, a much simpler affair to approach a solitary elephant than to find a good tusker in a herd. Further, the old solitary tusker offers the best trophies.

The head and shoulder shots are those usually taken in elephant shooting. With regard to the former, a great many elephants have been lost by trying it. The brain is very small proportionately to the size of the head, and if it is missed, the animal is little the worse. The skull contains a mass of bony cells that seem to be unaffected by bullets lodged in them. An elephant that gets away after head shots only is rarely recovered. One evening at dusk, in the Kathā District, when returning home, I heard elephants a little way off, and diverged with my Burmese hunter (who rejoiced in the easily pronounced name of Mo-Mo) to approach them. Stopping by a tree to listen, we heard an elephant crashing through the dense jungle towards us. A big looking tusker's head showed not a dozen paces from me. He

continued slowly moving on, passing me within a few yards. I tried the temple shot (with an eight-bore rifle) as I could see his head better than any other part. He nearly fell but recovered himself and made off. I had reserved my left in case he attacked, and by the time I could see he was not going to do so, the opportunity for using the second barrel in the thick cover had passed. Mo-Mo I noticed had climbed up a tree. There was a blood trail which we followed the next morning. The blood, however, soon ceased and we never saw the elephant again—which indeed I had not expected to do, as it was



FIG. 17.

a head shot, though Mo-Mo had expressed his opinion we should find the elephant dead.

Sterndale, in his "Natural History of the Mammalia of India," writes—"The brain in bulk does not greatly exceed that of a man, therefore the rest of the enormous head is formed of cellular bone, affording a large space for the attachment of the powerful muscles of the trunk, and at the same time combining lightness with strength. This cellular bone grows with the animal, and is in great measure absent at birth. In the young elephant the brain nearly fills the head, and the brain-case increases but little in size during growth, but the cellular portion progresses rapidly with the growth of the

my part, as I was aiming at the head on one occasion, and the shoulder on the other, and, in consequence of the elephant moving through jungle, did not hit where I aimed. One of them sank quietly into the kneeling position, that has been referred to as indicating an instantaneously fatal shot. This and the brain shot are the only two that can be depended on to cause instant death. Even if shot through the heart, elephant (and other big game) have been known to go several hundred yards before falling.

Some sportsmen recommend running after elephants after firing at them, in hopes of obtaining further shots before they get well under way. I have always done this with bison and buffalo, but rarely with elephant. I think running after or at them would very likely provoke a charge. Their appearance is rather overwhelming, and I suppose impresses me and makes me cautious; for the thought of being charged has never prevented me running after the other kinds of heavy game. After firing at elephants I generally prefer to hold my ground, and follow them up later on if necessary with due deliberation and precaution.

In following a wounded animal I always carried my rifle, accompanied by my second-gun bearer, and walked with the trackers, who worked under my close protection. The order of march for the rest was as already detailed. In passing through thick cover you should make the trackers go slowly, however easy the trail, and devote your attention to keeping a sharp look out. If the signs are so fresh as to give reason to believe that the game may be only a short distance away, it is as well to occasionally send a man up a tree to command view, especially if possible before entering any dense grass cover. These precautions apply with even greater force to other kinds of heavy game, which, on account of their lesser size, are more difficult to see, and better able to conceal themselves and lie in wait for the hunter, than elephants.

Sanderson says that in following wounded elephants he used to send his trackers on ahead, and follow them with his gunbearers at a hundred yards distance. He considered this the safest plan for the trackers, as he was of opinion they could work better and be more on the alert than if he closely accompanied them. On their signalling the presence of the game, he could come up (as he puts it) "with a knowledge of the position of the enemy."

I should not like to adopt this method. My view is that the trackers require the close protection of the gun (or guns), and all trackers I have worked with have seemed to entirely agree with me. In dense

cover they cannot tell at what moment they may be charged by a wounded animal. Moreover, whether the jungle be open or close, you may lose good chances if you are not with them.

You must push up to wounded animals whatever the nature of the ground or jungle. In Burma the worst kind in which to do this is "kaing" grass, previously described. But it should be done.

If the animal is known to be in a small bit of particularly dense cover, other means of moving it to more favourable ground may first be tried, such as giving it the wind from the outskirts, firing, shouting, throwing stones, or setting fire to the cover, but the conditions usually make any of these measures impracticable or futile.

If your first approach to a herd (or a single elephant) has been unsuccessful, and you have alarmed them without obtaining a shot, you will follow up and hope for better luck next time. I have found that elephants which have winded me generally go straight away for five or six miles before stopping or slackening again to rest or feed. This means three to six hours tracking, according to the nature of the ground, before again coming up with them.

If they have only seen or heard me they have usually moved but two or three miles, and occasionally less than a mile, before resuming their feeding and loitering.

If they are alarmed a second time, however, from whatever cause, they will probably go away for many miles before again slackening, and you may as well give them up unless you are prepared to sleep on their tracks. You may, in fact, hope to get a second chance of approaching the same elephants in one day, but, as a rule, not more. This generally applies to all heavy game.

Sometimes you strike the trail of animals (single or herds) that are making steadily for some distant part, and you may follow it all day without seeing them.

My first elephant was secured (but not killed) by the head shot. We had been trying to move a herd out of kaing grass by setting fire to it (the month was April), but had failed, the grass being too extensive, though it burnt splendidly, with a crackling roar. Late in the afternoon, on our way home, we diverged towards some water in the vicinity of which elephants might be found at that time of the day. There a man climbed a high tree and in a few minutes sighted some elephants about a quarter of a mile away. Having taken the wind, we went towards them. The sun was now getting low in the horizon. On arriving near the elephants, we found they were in ordinary grass and bush jungle, more open than usual, but without any trees within

a hundred yards of them. I approached with my second-gun bearer under cover of tussocks of grass and bushes to about twenty yards from a tusker—the only one I could make out. He was three-quarters facing me, and I had a better view of his head than any other part of him. I aimed between the eye and ear-hole, close to the eye, judging for the brain, and fired.

Getting clear of the smoke, I saw another elephant making off. The one fired at had dropped to the shot. Going up, I found him lying on his side breathing heavily, so gave him a finisher, judging for the heart. It was evident the bullet had not penetrated the central portion of the brain though it possibly grazed its surface. Perhaps the elephant was only stunned by my first shot, and would have soon got on his feet again but for the second. I measured him 8ft. straight between uprights at shoulder and foot up the line of the fore leg. He was not therefore full grown. The tusks proved to be 3ft. 3in. long and 9½in. in circumference at gum.

Though I had only obtained a very moderate prize, I felt elated at bagging my first elephant, as we paddled down an arm of the Irrawaddi homewards, the burning grass together with the setting sun making a lurid blaze in the distance.

Later in the month I had moved a couple of marches northwards, and established myself in the clean rest house of a very small village, called Ngardé, on the Shwelli River—a tributary of the great Irrawaddi. Most villages in Burma have a travellers' rest house, which, though affording primitive accommodation, is more roomy than a tent, and much cooler in hot weather. It consists generally of one room, about 20ft. by 15ft., raised on a wooden understructure of posts and cross beams 5ft. or 6ft. above the ground. To be well raised off the ground is a precaution against fever, and all Burmese houses are so built. Some rest houses are pleasantly situated within the grounds of the village temple, pagodas, and the priests' quarters. It is sure then to be clean—in fact the whole enclosure is so kept, and well swept every day. There are generally some fine shady trees and palm groves in it. Staying in one of these out-of-the-world old-time places, you feel it was just the same in character perhaps a thousand years ago: the priests in the same kind of yellow robes, the big bell sounding in the same solemn way, and the village children repeating their lessons and chanting their prayers morning and evening in the temple, even as at present.

The priests are the children's instructors, and are served by them in many ways. In the morning a procession may be seen of the

children under charge of some of the priests, bearing the latter's daily food from the village through the temple grounds to their kitchens.

On arriving at one of these rest houses the village women and girls bring you water, firewood, etc. The headman will also come, and some other men. The Burmese are a lively, pleasant people, and a good deal of chatter, banter, and laughter, will go on while they are depositing the things they have brought on the verandah. The young women are mostly good looking, fond of bright coloured clothes, and have none of the shyness of their Indian sisters.

The Ngardé rest house was not in the temple grounds, which were small. The boundary fences were separated by a distance of fifty to a hundred yards as well as I remember. The priest owned a flourishing banana garden, outside the actual temple precincts. On the second night of my arrival there, after an unsuccessful day's hunting, I was smoking a cigarette and thinking of turning in, when Mo-Mo entered and announced there was an elephant in the priest's garden, and proposed we should try to shoot it. I put on a shooting coat over my sleeping suit and we sallied forth. The night was too dark to see properly, and my light coloured pyjamas showed up with painful distinctness. The men with me were stripped except a waist-cloth, and practically invisible. So if the elephant attacked it would be sure to single me out. I therefore felt rather uncomfortable! Arriving near the plantation, we heard the robber breaking about inside it, no doubt thoroughly enjoying the bananas. We entered the enclosure and, creeping on, I tried to make out the elephant, perhaps now about thirty yards from me, but it was pitch dark in the shade of the plantation and I could distinguish nothing, though the position of the animal was indicated by its blowing, tearing, and crunching—a giant at supper. By this time I think we were all in a pretty nervous condition, and agreed with remarkable unanimity that it would be better not to shoot, and that there was no place like home. So we beat a noiseless retreat. I formed the rear guard, rifle in hand, hoping all the time the elephant would not catch sight of my pyjamas and come on to investigate. I really felt quite pleased when I found myself in the house again, but decided that this sort of thing was not good for the digestion after dinner!

We went to the garden just after daybreak, and found the depredator had made a wreck of it. We took up his tracks (by their size a tusker's) which led into high kaing grass. In less than an hour's tracking we heard the elephant. The grass was dense, but I determined to try for a shot, so telling the men to stay where they

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were, the wind being right, I approached the elephant as quietly as I could in the difficult cover, accompanied by my second-gun bearer—a military policeman named Kādir Baksh. Guided by the sounds of the elephant's movements in the grass and his blowing, which covered the sound of our own movement (though he was much less noisy than an elephant usually is in such cover), I got within twenty yards of him. I could see a tall piece of grass swaying about where he was. Kādir Baksh at this juncture adjured me to go no closer. We neither of us really liked the job. Nevertheless, it was no use stopping where we were, so I waited till the noise made by the elephant as he fed was greater than what would be caused by ourselves, and then seized the opportunity to advance while it lasted. Progressing thus slowly and laboriously, I must at length have arrived within a dozen yards of the animal, without being able to see the smallest bit of him. In trying to get nearer still, there was a sudden rush through the grass and away crashed the elephant. He had either heard or winded us. Calling up the men, we held a consultation. It seemed hopeless work following up in this impossible cover. Mo-Mo proposed to try a drive. The grass was not much more than a mile across in any direction, and the opinion was not only that the elephant would remain in it, but that from the direction of the trail he was in a certain portion of it whence he might be driven across a rather open space the men knew of, and perhaps offer a shot. Mo-Mo arranged the drive for which he collected eleven men. I was posted commanding the open space—a strip a few hundred yards long and five to fifteen wide. The wind was right as regarded myself, but would blow generally from the beaters towards the elephant, which would help in moving him and sending him in my direction. The whole affair was, of course, very speculative with so few men in such an extensive cover, since unless the game could be made to cross the limited length of open I should obtain a no chance of shot. Mo-Mo, however, disposed his men skilfully, and the drive was well carried out by all concerned. After a long wait (for it took an hour or two to get everyone into position) a crashing in the high grass showed the elephant was making my way. Listening to his progress, I placed myself where I judged I should see him well if he held on his course, and he shortly emerged on to the open strip about sixty yards from me, and stood broadside on but partly covered by grass—a fine looking tusker. I gave him my right, aiming half way up the shoulder, and then fired the left as he disappeared in the further cover. I felt I had hit him well with my first shot. After a little time we followed him up. His trail through the

kaing grass was easy to take on, and I led, followed by Kādir Baksh with my second rifle. After going less than a hundred yards from where the elephant was hit I saw him lying dead, though not till within ten yards of the huge body, which shows the difficulty of hunting in such cover. My bullet had hit where I aimed—half way up the body in line with the back of the fore leg. A quickly fatal lung shot. There was no blood on the trail till within five yards of where he lay dead, and then there was a good deal that had all come out of the mouth. From the bullet hole itself only a little blood had trickled for a few inches. I measured him 8ft. 10in. in height at the shoulder, and his tusks on being extracted proved to be 4ft. 0½in. long and 11½in. in circumference at the gum. The pair weighed 35lb. Thus was the raider of the priest's garden brought to book.

I killed my finest elephant in the Mong Long jungles, previously described. We started at six o'clock on a June morning. At nine o'clock we came upon what were pronounced to be the previous day's tracks of an elephant. If so, they were perhaps not worth following up, but I gave the order to do so, as I have often found (as already stated) that tracks of heavy game, considered at first to be a day old, become marvellously fresh after being followed for a mile. It so happened in this case. In a quarter of an hour the tracks, and also some dung, were pronounced to be of the night. In another quarter of an hour to be of the morning, and dung was found corroborating this. In half an hour therefore, the tracks had changed from those of the day before to the early morning's. At ten o'clock dung was come upon considered only two hours old. In an hour, therefore—or in two miles—the traces had changed from being pronounced say eighteen hours old to two hours old.

About 10.30 we suddenly saw the elephant—a fine solitary tusker—standing facing us some seventy yards away to our right. My pony was being led about 150 yards behind, and at that moment made a crash getting through the jungle. The tusker turned in the direction of the sound and took a few steps towards it. This move exposed his right shoulder; there was no time to be lost; he would have discovered the men and pony coming along behind us in a few moments and been off. I therefore fired at once right and left at his shoulder, on which he went about and sailed away with his head held high. I got in another shot at his stern, aiming for the liver, before he disappeared, and ran on some way in hopes of sighting him and putting in some more, but failed in this, and so took up the tracks again. There was a good blood trail from the shoulder shots, but in

half an hour it became much less. At about 11.30 we again sighted the tusker, standing left broadside on, some seventy yards down a slope. The shoulder was covered by jungle, and I did not like to make a very close approach before firing, in case I alarmed the elephant and lost the chance offered me. So having got within fifty yards I put in two more body shots as close to the shoulder as I could, and, following up, found blood on both sides of the tracks. It was a poor blood trail, however, and soon almost ceased, when we had only the tracks or the trail of beaten down grass to guide us. It came on to rain heavily and continued doing so for several hours. We had frequently to cross streams and marshy ground that sometimes threatened to bog us. The trackers kept on the trail well, only once being at fault for a few minutes, and at two o'clock we again sighted the elephant standing broadside on, fifty or sixty yards ahead. I put in two more body shots as near the shoulder as I could without delay, as these opportunities cannot be lost under such circumstances, and the tusker continued his retreat. He was not a fighter. I hurried after him and got within fifty yards, looking out for a chance of an effective shot. He now walked slowly, evidently hard hit, and I further lessened the distance between us. Suddenly he swung majestically round towards me. I reserved my fire as I thought he was going to charge. But he was too far gone. He made several steps towards me and fell with a crash—dead. Hurrah!—a good tusker at last. He had not fallen in a position in which he could easily be measured at the shoulder, so I passed the tape round the fore foot, which measured 4ft. 7in. in circumference. His height was therefore, at least, 9ft. 2in. The foot straight across at its widest part measured 19in. The tusks were 2ft. 2in. showing outside the gum, and 15in. in circumference there. On being extracted, the right tusk proved to be 4ft. 3in. in length, the left 4ft. 2in., and they weighed 61lb. the pair. They are represented in the frontispiece. The Shāns with me considered this elephant to be eighty or ninety years old.

CHAPTER XIV.

AFRICAN BLACK RHINOCEROS.

Somāli - Weel.

MY experience with this species (*Rhinoceros bicornis*) has been in Somāliland, in the southern part of the Haud and in Ogāden—the former being in the British and the latter in the Italian Protectorate. They are fairly numerous in Ogāden, but only a few come northward into the Haud.

Though massive, bulky beasts, they do not stand very high at the shoulder. The highest I measured was 4ft. 10in. (14'2).

The horns are, generally speaking, the same length in both the bulls and cows, but the bull's are thicker. Swayne says that a good pair measures 19in. for the front horn, and 5in. for the back one. The back one, however, is often much longer than that. The best pair I shot measured—front horn, 17in., and back, 11½in.

The black rhinoceros feeds chiefly on thorn bush, and is therefore usually found in that cover or in its neighbourhood.

I have never seen more than two rhinoceroses together, and have generally found them single. Colonel Patterson, in his book "In the Grip of the Nyika," relates how he saw sixteen rhinoceroses at midnight, squealing, screaming, and struggling in their efforts to get at a waterhole, only some 200 yards from his camp.

I have perhaps half a dozen times seen a cow rhinoceros with a calf, but never with more than one.

Their sight is undoubtedly poor. Their hearing (judging by my own experience) is good enough to put them on the alert when approached in thick bush which cannot be walked in noiselessly. If care be taken regarding the wind, they can be approached closely in favourable cover, but are often hard to distinguish when standing at rest under the dark shade of a spreading mimosa. I have come upon

a rhinoceros (and her calf) asleep in a sitting position under a small tree in very open bush.

Swayne calls them the most stupid animals he ever shot, but all the same I consider it difficult to hunt them successfully in the kind of jungle in which they are usually found.

They are curiously obstinate, not to say "pig-headed" animals; and if anything annoys them, they frequently make straight for the cause of it, not altering their course whatever its nature. In approaching them I have generally been charged, or at all events the direction taken by the rhinoceros on being disturbed has been straight on to me. It is true I have not known them turn after their enemy, nor (with one exception) stay to damage him, but their rush has either to be stopped or avoided, which latter proceeding is not always easy in the thorn bush they affect in Somäliland. The "rhino" in this rush puffs and snorts like a steam engine, which accompaniment of sound as the great beast breaks through the jungle is apt to give the hunter "the jumps."

I once came by chance on a rhinoceros in thick thorn bush. I was following my tracker at a couple of paces distance (proceeding up wind) when I saw him suddenly stop and commence to back slowly out of the way. The next moment a rhino charged us. We had just time to throw ourselves to one side amongst the bushes regardless of thorns, and the animal passed almost over me. She (it was a cow) went on and scattered the rest of my party, nearly catching the pony, which she lunged at with her horn as it broke loose and galloped away. Then we heard the bleating of her calf near the spot where we had disturbed its mother. It was quite small and the men offered to catch it, but I could not be bothered with it, as it would have been an immense trouble to keep it alive. An elephant would probably not have deserted her young as this rhinoceros did, though I daresay she returned to it when the coast was clear.

Regarding this rush of the black rhinoceros on being alarmed, I have heard a theory that when this species rests, it makes up its mind as to the direction it will take if disturbed, and consequently, no matter what the position or numbers of the disturbers may be, it will take that particular line; and that this accounts for the numerous cases on record of so-called charges, and of rhinoceros going through caravans on the march. It is strange, however, that this pre-determined line should so frequently be straight in the direction of the hunter, or through a camp or caravan.

I have known rhino on several occasions charge or rush towards

me on discovering my presence though I was down wind from them. Any wild animal bent on escaping (except the perverse rhino) would naturally go off up wind when its enemy was to leeward of it. I think the more likely explanation of the rhino's peculiarity is that, though intending to make off, it wishes to "have a whack" at the intruder *en passant*.

The paces of the rhinoceros are the walk, trot, and gallop. When thoroughly alarmed or in making their rush they gallop at a great rate.

A sign of rhinoceros I have come across, besides broken and nibbled thorn bush, tracks, and dung, are marks in the ground two or



FIG. 18.

three feet long and several inches deep, made, my Somālis said, by the horn.

The dung is often deposited repeatedly in the same place, so that considerable heaps of it may be seen.

The form of the track of a full-grown rhinoceros, when clearly imprinted, showing the three toe marks (of which the middle one is much the largest), is as illustrated—about a quarter size.

I did not find any difference to speak of in the size or shape of the feet of bulls and cows, nor in that of the fore and hind feet. Both my hunters became *hors de combat*, so I had only the assistance of some of the camelmén in tracking for the greater part of my rhino shooting.

They could not tell me for certain whether tracks were those of bulls or cows, but that may have been because we never had the luck to follow a very big bull. The general size of tracks was about 10 in. long and 9 in. wide.

Besides the usual method of shooting by following up tracks, Swayne bagged several rhinoceros in Somäliland by watching pools at night for them. The pools were at long distances from any other water. I never sat up over water in that country.

For the brain shot, if the rhinoceros is standing broadside to you, aim just under the anterior part of the butt of the ear at the point indicated in the sketch. If at any angle, aim so that your bullet will strike the centre of a line passing through these points. In case of the animal coming directly on to you, the front horn covers the brain,



FIG. 19.

and the chest shot must be taken. A rhino in his rush or charge, if the bush is at all open, gallops in great style, head up, with high action, till within reach of a man, when he lowers his head to horn his opponent, as I have myself seen.

I have twice tried for the brain shot, and was successful only one of those times. The rhino's head was slightly turned towards me, (forming about a quarter face), and at a rather lower level than my rifle. The bullet hit just in front and under the butt of the ear, killing the animal instantaneously.

Swayne mentions a successful head shot in the following words—
“The bull dropped in his tracks, an inert mass. Going up, we found that the ten-bore had hit him exactly where I had aimed, the bullet

entering under the left ear and stopping under the skin of the right temple."

My first introduction to rhinoceros was in the month of July in the southern part of the Haud. We had noticed rhino tracks one day while on the march, and I left camp at six o'clock the next morning to work over the ground, accompanied by my hunters, Jāma and Moosa, carrying the eight-bores, and two camelmén with a '303 rifle and other necessary things. We all walked together—a compact party. About 7.45 we found the night's tracks of a cow rhinoceros and calf, and followed them up. The tracks were fairly plain in the red powdery soil, but difficult to keep to where there was much grass. The cow had made a maze of tracks, wandering about, but the men puzzled them out and we ultimately came upon quite fresh ones and dung. The men now removed their sandals. I was wearing rubber-soled boots, which made no noise. We advanced along the tracks cautiously, Jāma and I leading. At about 9.30 we came up to the rhino, standing under a mimosa tree. Jāma suddenly pointed her out—a dark form looming in the shade of the tree, thirty to forty yards off, and said, "shoot sir, shoot!" I could not make out how the rhino stood, but fired my right into the centre of the dark form. Out came the rhino, grunting, blowing, and dashing about as if uncertain what direction to take (which rather explodes a theory previously mentioned), during which time I plied her with a rapid fire from the two eight-bores, as they were reloaded and handed to me by Jāma and Moosa. After having received seven bullets, she charged me, and I dropped her at about twenty yards into a sitting position with a bullet in the chest. The calf would not leave its mother and was big enough to damage anyone going near it, so I shot it. My men raised a hunting song and warmly congratulated me on the success, each shaking hands with me.

I sent to camp for a camel to take away the trophies, which consisted of the head, tail, and those portions of the skin from which Somālis manufacture their fighting shields. I also brought away a leg of the calf for meat. Swayne recommends it as very good. Whether or no the fault lay in the cooking I cannot say, but on trying it I could not agree with him. Somālis do not eat it. They, however, are very fanciful regarding meat, refusing to eat fish, game birds, and even some kinds of antelope—Waller's gazelle for instance. In fact, they consider all game dry, and like nothing so much as a fat sheep, especially the fat.

In August I was hunting in Ogāden, and lost Moosa's services for

a time, owing to his being knocked down and hurt by a rhinoceros. We came that day unexpectedly on two of these animals, sixty or seventy yards off. Approaching a little nearer, I hit one (they were broadside on), and they both immediately turned and charged straight at me. Getting my second rifle I fired at the one leading by half a length, and then dodged to a side under cover of some bushes. The rhinos dashed on and disappeared. We had also all disappeared! and took a little time to reassemble, turning up from different points of the compass, laughing and joking at our rout. Finding blood we followed up, and in half an hour stumbled right on to a rhino (a cow) which got up within ten yards of us. As she did so I shot her through the hind-quarters which were towards me. She at once turned round and charged in amongst us, catching Moosa, knocking him over, and wounding him about the legs with her horn. Before she knocked him down I gave her my left on the flank. I then dashed about for my second rifle, the bearer of which was not to be seen for a few moments, and by the time I had got it, the rhino was disappearing in the thick bush, so that I only managed to obtain a snap shot at her stern. Going to see Moosa I found him lying like a dead man. On my speaking to him he began to groan. He had, however, escaped with some rubs and slight wounds on the leg and thighs. Blood was trickling from the wounds and he imagined himself to be much worse than he was. I then followed up the rhinoceros and came upon her in a quarter of an hour sitting down, head towards me, about forty yards away. I walked round till I obtained a flank view, then gave her a shoulder shot which turned her over on her side, and (as she struggled) finished her with another.

We got Moosa to camp supported by a couple of men. I dressed his wounds daily and he was well again in a fortnight, but I did the rest of my rhino-shooting without him.

About a week after Moosa's misadventure, we were following some fresh tracks early in the morning, when we heard the rhinoceros squealing. Approaching, we saw two rhinos standing facing each other, their noses not more than a foot apart, and evidently quarrelling to the accompaniment of plenty of "language." I got within thirty yards and fired as near the shoulder as possible at the one offering the clearer shot, they both being partially covered by jungle. At the shot the rhinos bolted, but I gave the other one my left as they galloped away, and taking my second rifle ran after them in hopes of getting another shot, which, however, I failed to do. Looking for blood we found some—the trail of one rhino only. I was pretty sure that both

were hit, so before following this trail I told the men to look for that of the other. A short way off we found it with plenty of blood, and taking it up soon came on the rhino (a bull) lying dead. The bullet (of my left) had caught him on the flank some way behind the shoulder and must have raked forward into the lungs. There was no blood to speak of from the bullet hole itself, but it was pouring from his mouth. We took up the trail of the other, following it for several hours, and finding only a little blood now and then. As this rhino continued to go straight without stopping or loitering anywhere, and the men thought it useless to keep on, I gave it up. When nearing camp they commenced the Somāli hunting song denoting success, and my followers in camp, hearing it, turned out and gave three English cheers. Somālis are always very appreciative of success in shikar.

CHAPTER XV.

BISON.*

Hindustāni - - - Gāor, Ban Boda, Bhainsa.
 Burmese - - - Pyoung.

THIS magnificent animal is the finest member of the bovine family in the world.

A grand solitary bull, jet black, and standing six feet at the shoulder, forms indeed a noble quarry for the sportsman. The charm of his pursuit through the primeval forests in which he is found can never pall, so long as the hunter remains a big game devotee, and retains sound wind and limb.

The bison is generally distributed throughout India and Burmah in all the heavily forested hill tracts, with the exception of the Terai west of Assam.

Sanderson states that they prefer heights of 2000 to 5000 feet, but that he has shot them at less than a hundred feet elevation within three miles of the Chittagong coast.

On the east side of the Indrawatti River, below its abrupt bend to the south, where it divides the Ahiri Zamindāri from Bastar, and where the country—at an elevation of 500 to 1000 feet—is less hilly than at other parts of its course, I have seen bison and buffalo on the same ground—that is, within half a mile of each other.

I found bison fairly numerous in the Northern Shān State of Mong Long, at elevations of 3000 to 4000 feet.

The colour of a big, mature bull is a deep, glossy black, with four yellowish white stockings and grey forehead. The head has a thoroughbred look. The hair is short, close, and smooth on the

* Scientifically a misnomer, this species not being a true bison; but it is the name in popular use in India and Burma.

back and flanks, with a satin sheen like the coat of a well-groomed horse. Cows and young bulls are a chestnut brown, becoming darker in the case of the bulls as they increase in age.

Full-grown bulls are usually 16 to 18 hands in height—cows 15 to 16. Greater heights are recorded in Burma, but as regards India, Forsyth, Sanderson, and Kinloch, are all of opinion that 18 hands is the extreme height attained by bulls, if measured correctly, that is, straight between uprights at withers and heel, on the line of the fore leg.

The foot is well formed and very small for so large an animal, but adapted for climbing steep and rugged hills.

The withers are very high, and merge into a well-defined dorsal ridge, which ends with a sudden drop about half way between the withers and tail. This ridge may induce the sportsman to aim too high up the body. Taking in the dorsal ridge, about a third up, in the line of the back of the fore leg, will answer the purpose.

The horns have a sweep outwards, upwards, forwards, and inwards (the forward inclination commencing about half way up), and are of a light greenish yellow hue with black tips, smooth, polished, and sharp in young animals, but becoming corrugated and much thicker at the base, with chipped or blunted points, in old bulls. The cows' horns are comparatively small.

A bison's head is shown in the frontispiece (from a photograph of a group of trophies in my possession) above the elephant tusks. This head was obtained in Mong Long, and is the best I have shot, judged by the thickness of the horns. The left horn is chipped near the tip. The measurements were—tip to tip along outside curve across forehead (of bare skull), 67in.; straight between tips, 20½in.; across the sweep (or widest outside span), 31½in.; circumference at base, each horn, 18¾in.

The last measurement becomes an inch or more less after a head has been kept a year or so, the horns shrinking at the base.

The bullet hole (which is apparent in the illustration) between the eyes was too low for the brain, to hit which it should have been about four inches higher, or midway between the line of the eyes and the top of the skull, supposing the head to be held vertically. If held horizontally with the nose poked forward, as sometimes done by both bison and buffalo, the best shot, in the case of the throat and chest being covered, would be between the nostrils; since, with the head in that position, a bullet striking the forehead would probably glance off. Evans relates such a case which happened to himself. All he could

see of the bison within twenty yards in thick cover was the base of the horns and the forehead. He fired at the forehead and heard the bullet strike, but away dashed the bison, who had been holding his head high with the nose poked out, and the bullet had glanced off the hard skull.

The measurements of some big bulls were as under :—

Sanderson's best.—From tip to tip across forehead, 74in. ; across the sweep, 33in. ; circumference at base, each, 19in. ; straight between tips, 19in.

Kinloch's best.—Tip to tip, 69in. ; across sweep, 36in. The other measurements are not given.

Forsyth's best.—Across sweep, $37\frac{1}{2}$ in. ; circumference, each, 17in. The height at shoulder was 17.1. No other measurements are given.

Evans's best.—Right horn, $31\frac{1}{2}$ in. ; left, $30\frac{1}{4}$ in. (which would make about 73in. from tip to tip if measured over the bare skull) ; circumference, each, $18\frac{3}{4}$ in.

Thom's best.—Tip to tip, 81in. ; between tips, 21in. ; across sweep, $42\frac{1}{2}$ in. ; circumference, each, $20\frac{1}{2}$ in. Height at shoulder, 20 hands.

The first three were Indian heads, the others were Burmese.

A splendid head, even bigger than the last mentioned, except in circumference, was shot by Mr. Gordon Hadfield, of the Forest Department, in Southern India some years ago, and is recorded in "Bullet and Shot," by Mr. Russell of the same service, as follows :—

Tip to tip, 83in. ; between tips, 31in. ; across sweep, 44in. ; circumference, each, $19\frac{1}{2}$ in.

In this book Mr. Russell describes the way to measure the "sweep" in the following words :—"The proper method by which to obtain the accurate sweep measurement is to place the head flat on a table, the forehead downwards, and with a knife to make a scratch round the outside edge of each of the horns at the widest part, and then, after removal of the head, to measure the distance between the scratches."

Looking at a bison's thick, curved horn, it would hardly be supposed (except in the fine horns of a young bull) to be a good stabbing weapon, or that the point would be sharp enough to give it great penetration through skin and muscle ; but there have been many instances proving the spear-like penetration of which it is capable.

Evans mentions being shown by two Burmese hunters (on separate occasions) scars of wounds received from bison. Both men had been charged from behind, and, as they were doubtless running away, there would be the less resistance to the impact of the horn. The wounds

are described in the following words:—"One was caught in the posterior, the animal's horn having penetrated the right buttock to a depth of about 6in. The healed scar showed what a gaping wound it must have inflicted. The other man was wounded high up in thigh. The bison's horn had caught the back of the thigh, and, scraping the bone, had penetrated the limb, and actually come through on the inside. It was a wonder the femoral artery was not severed."

A few years ago a planter in Mysore, was attacked unexpectedly from behind by an unwounded bison, which horned him through the back, making a very large wound and penetrating the lung.

A sportsman (an officer in the Army) was lately killed by a wounded bison he was following up, a horn entering the abdomen and practically disembowelling him.

In the case of a well-known sportsman who was killed in Malay, a horn penetrated his right side under the ribs, and his companion stated he was tossed against a branch over thirty feet high.

An extraordinary instance of the penetrative power of the horns of the bovines was that of a wild buffalo (whose horns are less adapted for stabbing than the bison's) which was found in a dying state with the body of a native impaled on one of its horns. The horn had gone right through the man, and the buffalo had been unable to get rid of the corpse, whose constant weight and interference with the animal's feeding reduced it to its miserable condition. The state of the body indicated that the buffalo had probably been two or three weeks carrying its ghastly burden. The man's death was certainly revenged.

Forsyth is of opinion that the rutting season for bison is the cold weather (November to February), and that the young are generally born during the rainy season (July to September), when the mothers separate a good deal, remaining for two or three months secluded in some spot where grazing and water are plentiful.

Sanderson agrees with this to the extent that most calves are born in September, and some between April and that month, and that the mother separates from the herd on the birth of her calf, but (and here the opinions diverge considerably) keeps it in one place for about four days, feeding near it till it is strong enough to accompany the herd, which remains in the locality, and which she then rejoins with her offspring.

Evans states that Burmese hunters aver there is no fixed season for breeding, and that the period of gestation is eleven months.

Sanderson thinks bison live to about fifty years of age.

Their food consists chiefly of grasses and bamboo shoots.

According to my own experience, herds usually number ten to fifteen individuals, composed of cows and a few young bulls, with a full-grown bull as lord of the herd.

Sanderson and Evans state they have seen herds numbering over a hundred, but that these were probably several herds that had joined by chance, and would soon separate.

Solitary bulls are generally old ones, and carry the best heads, the thickness of the horns or circumference at base indicating its value as a trophy.

Herd bulls often have a handsome sweep of horn, but not so massive as those of the solitaires.

Younger bulls are sometimes found temporarily solitary, having been worsted in a fight with some leader of a herd in a quarrel over a cow, but such are only biding their time to again join a herd.

The movements and daily habits of bison, are much like those of elephants, as has been stated in treating of the latter animals, except that they fight shy of cultivation and villages. Colonel Pollok, however, says that he has seen whole fields devastated by them in the Northern Circars.

Sounds made by bison are a loud snort when suddenly alarmed, grunting while feeding, and roaring under the influence of rage or pain. The first sound I have often heard on starting a herd: the second I have only once heard, and was made by a large solitary bull, judging by his tracks, which, in the soft ground, were five to six inches long, and the same in width. These we took up, but never saw the animal. He was probably several hundred yards off in thick jungle when we first heard him, grunting repeatedly, and unless he had become aware of our presence (which was unlikely), he must by a coincidence have just then commenced to move. The time was 7.30 a.m., and we followed him till two o'clock over steep hills in a direction generally away from home, without being able to come up to him. He was evidently changing his ground, for he fed nowhere, and went on continually except at one place where he had stopped to paw up the ground, and another where he had been using his horns on the upturned root of a tree. Not being prepared to sleep out on that occasion, we had to abandon the pursuit in order to reach our huts by nightfall.

Regarding this grunting while feeding, Evans says that members of herds do not make it, only solitary bulls.

Other sounds made by bison, but which I have not myself heard, are, according to Sanderson, a sonorous bellow—used to call each

other at a distance—which can be heard for about a mile, and a low “moo,” indicative of apprehension or curiosity.

The bison’s senses of sight, hearing, and smell, are all well developed.

In Evans’s opinion, they can wind a man with even the faintest breeze up to 300 yards, and farther with a favourable wind, but he considers that their sense of smell is not nearly so keen as that of elephants.



FIG. 20.

Traces of bison are cropped bamboos, dung, and tracks. A sign denoting they are not far off is said to be their odour (like that of tame cattle), which remains some time in places where they have been standing or lying down. I do not remember ever having noticed this.

The form of the tracks of a full-grown bull, if clearly imprinted, are as illustrated—about a quarter size.

It will be observed the fore foot track is rounder and broader than that of the hind foot. Cow tracks are like the hind ones of bulls.

Tracking bison is often disappointing work. After hours of it a change of wind may give you away, or you may easily give warning to the game by having to force your way through thick cover, however carefully you do it, especially if the bison are at rest. When feeding they at times make a certain amount of noise themselves which may help you, but nothing to be compared to that made by elephants.

If you are trying to find the best bull in a herd, you will probably be discovered by some vigilant cow. A solitary bull is consequently easier to approach, and there is the added inducement that, as a rule, he carries a more massive head than a herd bull. Some of the latter's horns, however, are very fine, with a handsome sweep and perfect tips. Still, there is no doubt (as in all heavy-game shooting) the pursuit of a herd cannot equal the attraction of that of an old solitaire. But the latter's tracks are much more rarely found than the former's. In fact, to find the fresh enough tracks of a big solitary bull is an event, and a cause for great rejoicing.

As to the frequent disappointments and the long, hard days without result, these but spur the keen hunter to further perseverance. The uncertainty and the element of luck in big game shooting is part of its charm. You are always hoping for some great good fortune, and this hope ever draws you on to increased efforts.

It is as well to run after bison, after alarming or firing at them, since they do not go very fast, and sometimes stop to look back within a hundred yards from where they started. Of course, in doing this you should be on the look out not to run against a wounded one in thick cover. Some obstacle may also delay them and give you further opportunities. I once killed a bull, dropping him on the spot at about fifty yards, in a small herd which contained another and bigger one that I did not see till they went off. I ran after them for nearly 200 yards without a chance of singling him out, until a steep nullah coming in their way delayed them, and I was able to get shots at the bull (at a distance of about seventy yards) as he clambered up the opposite side; but, breathless with running, I missed.

In taking up the tracks of wounded or alarmed bison, the same remarks apply that I made regarding elephants in this matter.

My first introduction to bison was not a successful one. It was in the Ahiri Zamindāri of the Chānda District, in the early part of May a good many years ago. We came on a herd of bison in rather open forest, whom we alarmed by the sound of our walking on the dried leaves that then everywhere strewed the ground. As they made off

I ran after them for over a quarter of a mile, and, without being able with any certainty to distinguish bulls from cows, fired several shots at them at distances of about a hundred yards, as opportunities occurred; they going slowly and stopping more than once before I lost sight of them for good. We could find no blood, and I had quite exhausted myself by running so hard in the great heat. Good shooting can rarely be made under such circumstances.

My next meeting with bison was a week later and had a better result. I left camp at daybreak, and after working four or five miles the two Mārias scouting in front sat down and signalled me to come up. I got off my pony and joining them was told they had just seen a bison. I could not see it myself, but taking one of the Mārias for the eight-bore and to show me the game, while I carried a double '577 Express (black powder), we commenced a careful approach. I soon made out the bison, and, moving very slowly and carefully, managed to get within seventy or eighty yards. The animal's shoulder and greater part of the body were covered by intervening trees and grass, and I was considering what to do—the dried leaves making movement without noise most difficult—when I noticed the bison (a bull) was moving forward, feeding. So I got into a sitting position for shooting, and waited. In a few moments his shoulder appeared in full view, then nearly the whole body. Aiming at the shoulder with the Express, I fired and sprang forward clear of the smoke. Hurrah! the bison was down, struggling on the ground. What joy as I rushed up! and saw a fine bull at his last gasp. A single bullet had done the work. It had hit rather far back from the shoulder and high up, a shot I have found very effective on all kinds of game, though never taken intentionally. This bull stood a good 16 hands measured in the correct way as previously described. The head measurements were—tip to tip across forehead, 59in.; circumference at base, each horn, 16½in.

A few days after this I had an exciting encounter with a bison which might have ended unpleasantly for me, and was brought about by my then inexperience with this kind of game. I had crossed the Indrawatti River into Bastar, and was camped in a wild forest and hill country inhabited only by the aboriginal Māria tribe. We started soon after daybreak one morning to hunt for bison, but the first thing we saw that we decided on attacking was a large python lying asleep. I did not like to shoot it as the report might have disturbed game. My men set to work and cut down a straight sapling, about ten feet high, with their axes, lopping and trimming off the branches, when

I had a fine two-handed staff to wield about seven feet long. The idea of making it so long was to avoid the necessity of approaching the great snake very closely in order to strike it; but, on the other hand, it made quick play with it impossible. When I took this weapon and approached the python, I noticed the men retired and stood twenty yards away. There were three Mārias as far as I remember, an Ahiri man engaged as gunbearer, and my syce. I had no "orderly" in those days. I did not think much about this attitude on their part at the time, being engrossed in my own intended action, but it struck me afterwards as curious, and that I might reasonably have asked the Mārias to back me up with their axes, or, if they considered these too short, to have waited till they fashioned themselves some staves. However, what I did do was to advance on the sleeping monster and deal it a blow with all my might on its neck close to the head (I had aimed for the head). On receiving the blow, the python woke up, but was sufficiently stupefied and taken by surprise to let me get in several more whacks, after which it came at me, advancing by successive coils and darts. I stepped back, facing it, and dealing blow after blow at the same time at its head. I had taken perhaps less than a dozen steps back in this manner, luckily without falling over anything, when the python gave up its attack, and turned away endeavouring to escape; but I followed up closely, and after a few more blows rendered it almost motionless, and the men then joined in and finished it with their axes. I had the python cut open at a slight swelling in its body, and took out a hare, complete even to its fur, which was, however, worn away in patches, owing I suppose to the digestive process having commenced. The snake was a good sixteen feet long.

After this we went on working for game, and in another hour or so the scouts in front sighted bison. Favoured by a large anthill, I got to within a hundred yards, pushed my Express over the mound and waited, the bison (a couple of bulls) at the time being covered by intervening jungle. One shortly moved forward and exposed his shoulder. Taking careful aim, I fired and, jumping up clear of the smoke, saw the bull still standing in the same place, on which I gave him my left. At the second shot away went the two bison. Seizing the eight-bore, I ran after them and obtained two more shots, one at each, but these must have been misses. The bison separated, disappearing in different directions. We found blood and followed it up—that of the one first fired at. We soon caught sight of the bull again, walking a few hundred yards ahead, the forest being very open at this season—the

height of the hot weather before the commencement of the rains. He was on the alert, and increasing his pace was quickly out of sight. This occurred several times in the course of the next hour, the bull giving no chance of an effective shot during the few seconds he was in view through intervening jungle. The men then proposed to bring some dogs from their village (if a few bamboo huts in a clearing can be so called) which happened to be not more than a mile distant. I agreed to this and waited till they returned in an hour with three dogs. We now again took up the trail and in ten minutes sighted the bison. The dogs were halloosed on and raced after him. I mounted my pony and, taking the Express, galloped after them. In less than a quarter of a mile the dogs brought the bison to bay, and I unthinkingly, in the enthusiasm of the chase, rode up within twenty yards of him and threw myself off for a finishing shot. I should have dismounted at least fifty yards from him after selecting a tree as a point *d'appui*. My feet had hardly touched the ground when the bull charged me. He seemed to spring at me, and was on me like lightning. I saw in a flash that I should not have time to fire and get out of the way, even if I had shot him dead—so ran. The pony bolted also, and was not recovered till it found its way to camp. The bison followed me closely. I doubled several times—followed turn for turn. I have been asked why I did not get behind a tree. I had no time to think about trees or anything else except how to avoid the horns of my pursuer. As a matter of fact, there were very few trees just there. Doubling in front of a bison, as may be imagined, is pretty severe exercise, and I do not know how long it lasted—probably not half a minute, but I was beginning to feel done and to think I should be caught. When I doubled, or threw myself aside, for the last time, I do not suppose the bull's horns were a foot from my back. It was a close thing. Feeling after this last effort I was no longer followed, I turned and saw the enemy moving on about twenty yards off. He was no doubt feeling sick from the two shoulder shots, and had abandoned the pursuit. Automatically, as it were, I had retained hold of my rifle all the time; and, unsteady as I was, promptly gave the bison my right, after which he went on a few yards further and faced me. I then gave him my left, on which he turned and moved off again. I ran a little way back for the eight-bore, which was in my gunbearer's hands, who was amongst the men now nearing the scene of action, and getting it, approached the bison. He was standing under a tree, facing me as I came up—the dogs round him. I walked up to within thirty yards and dropped him with the right. A fine young bull, about 15 hands

high, with a handsome, sharp-pointed pair of horns, measuring 56in. tip to tip.

There were five bullet holes—two on the shoulder (well placed within a few inches of each other), one about six inches behind the elbow, and two in the chest. One of the last two was the finishing shot with the eight-bore.

Some years later (1896) I was again shooting in Bastar, and had pitched my camp for some days in a hunter's paradise as regards bison and buffalo. These paradises (which the hunter is ever seeking) are not often found, and when hit upon cannot last long, since the game soon clears out to move to undisturbed parts.

The month was June, and a fair amount of rain had fallen, making the ground good for tracking and noiseless walking. On a rainy morning I started later than usual (8.30) to look for bison and buffalo. At 10.45 we found what were considered the early morning's tracks of a herd of bison. We followed them up, and had been doing so for half an hour, when suddenly out of the grass, fifty yards in front of us, rose a splendid black bull bison. He stood broadside on with his head turned towards us. It was raining pretty hard, and my rifles were in their covers, though loaded. By the time I could pull the eight-bore out, the bison turned and went off, disappearing in the jungle. I managed to get a snap-shot at his hindquarters before they quite disappeared, and then ran hard for another shot. A hundred yards on I got a chance, and fired my left at the bison as he lumbered through the jungle seventy or eighty yards away. Both my shots must have been clean misses—not a drop of blood could we find, and if an eight-bore hits anywhere it is pretty sure to draw blood. My feelings were not enviable. However, there was nothing to be done. It was no use following an animal so thoroughly scared. So back we went to the tracks of the herd, and took them up again. About 12.30 we came upon them. For a second time we were taken unawares. The men had not judged the freshness of the tracks correctly; they thought them an hour or two old at the very time we came plump on the herd, consisting of eight or nine bison. When we first noticed them they were in long grass some seventy yards away, but they had seen us first and were off. Again I had to pull the eight-bore out of its cover and run for a shot. I did not get one. I might have fired at what looked like a bull, but I thought the chance he gave moving a hundred yards away through the jungle was not good enough, and that by not frightening the herd by firing they might allow us to come up with them later. I was right in this. Resuming the tracking, the

rifles now out of their covers (which they always should be, rain or no rain), we sighted the bison again very soon, but could not manage to obtain a shot, and ultimately, continuing on the move, they disappeared. Taking on the trail, we saw to our left a small herd of buffalo. We held on to the bison tracks and about 2.30 sighted two of them quite close. The men in front of me sank down and tried to point them out, but I could distinguish nothing at first. At length I saw what were possibly a bison's horns some fifty yards off, and something dark between them. My gunbearer said it was a bull. I then saw that he must be looking straight at me, so, raising the eight-bore, aimed below the head and fired. The smoke obscured any view of the result of the shot, and as I sprang forward to get clear of it I saw a bison making off, at which I fired my left without effect. I thought it was the one at which I fired my right, but a man climbing a tree said a bison was down. I went up and found a good bull struggling on the ground, and finished him with another shot. The first bullet had caught him in the centre of the throat after grazing along between the jaw bones. No blood was found on the trail of the other. The head measured, tip to tip, 72in.; between tips, 17in.; circumference, each horn, 16½in. The height at shoulder was 16 hands.

Another morning we blundered on to a solitary bull bison. I never saw him, as I was riding some way behind the scouts at the time, but according to them he was a very big bull and had seen us. The tracks were large. We followed him the whole day. In some parts the tracking was easy, in others difficult, as on stony ground and long grass. We had one check of nearly an hour, but the men managed to hit it off again. About three o'clock we came to where he had lain down. Soon after that we found his tracks very deeply imprinted. He had evidently been galloping. The opinion was he had got our wind while we were puzzling out his tracks, which wound about in every direction, made probably when he was feeding. That was bad luck. We kept on tracking till evening, and then gave it up.

Two days after this (June 24th) I had a red-letter day. We left camp at 6.30, and a little before seven found fresh tracks of two bull bison. Following them, we came upon the bison in a few minutes, only thirty yards off. I could just make out the head and horns of one above the grass. I thought he was looking towards me, but as it turned out afterwards he was looking away from me. I fired at the middle of what showed below the horns with the eight-bore, and then jumping aside saw the other bison standing broadside to me. I dropped him with a shoulder shot rather high up. The one first fired at had

fallen dead. I had hardly reloaded when the one dropped by the left barrel got up and floundered away. I ran after him and gave him two more with the eight-bore. He wheeled round and looked like charging, while I with an empty rifle in my hands looked out for a handy tree as shelter. But he was too far gone to charge, and by the time I had reloaded he was lying down facing me. I finished him with a bullet on the point of the shoulder. Going up to the first killed, I found a splendid bull though not an old one. The bullet had caught him in the back of the head, coming out in front to one side under the base of the left horn. The other bull was not so big, but quite a fine one. The measurements of the first were—tip to tip, 73in.; between tips, 17in.; circumference, each, 16 $\frac{3}{4}$ in.; height, 17.2. The second—tip to tip, 66in.; between tips, 22 $\frac{1}{2}$ in.; circumference, each, 16in.; height, 16.2.

Camp was not far off, and some of my followers, attracted by the firing, appeared on the scene. So, as the day was still young, I gave them orders regarding the heads, meat, etc., and went on hunting. I returned home in the afternoon with yet another fine trophy, in the shape of the head of a very large bull buffalo.

I shot my best bison in the Northern Shān State of Mong Long in Upper Burma. I had discovered some old disused huts on the summit of a hill that must have been over 4000 feet high, six or seven miles north of the huts which I had built as my shooting headquarters, described in Chapter XII. The only water on that hill was from a spring some way down a steep slope below the deserted huts. There was no ground near where cultivation could ever have been carried on, and villages are rarely or never placed on the summit of such a hill. From the circumstances I came to the conclusion that these huts were made by some dacoit or other band, fighting against us in the war, to serve as a safe retreat from which they could plan their raids. The men with me could not or would not tell me anything concerning their origin.

I collected enough men, as carriers, from a larger village in the direction of Maymyo, and made a trip to the erstwhile "robbers' haunt" (as I termed it in my diary), where I established myself for some days to hunt especially for solitary bull bison.

On arriving at the broken down huts in the morning, the first thing I did was to set the carriers and other men to work (after they had rested a little) to make the two we required habitable. A satisfactory point regarding them was that the raised platforms on which they were built, in accordance with Burmese custom, were all strong

and substantial. To be well raised off the ground is a great guard against fever.

In a few hours the two selected huts were re-roofed where necessary, and generally repaired with bamboo, long grass, and other materials available in the jungle close by. The men then left for their village, and my party settled down in their new quarters.

We had an extensive view from our hill-top over a wild jumble of hills and forests, uninhabited by man. I looked forward to coming on gigantic bulls in this tract northwards, as yet unshot and even unvisited, so far as I could gather, by any white man. How sweet are these dreams and anticipations of the sportsman!

I hunted for three successive days without finding the tracks of a solitary bull, though we saw those of herds. The country was really mountainous, and exhausting to work over. It was too difficult for a pony, as I found on the first day. After these three days very bad weather set in with heavy rain, which kept us in for two days. The month was August, in which the heaviest rains of the year occur.

The morning of the sixth day broke with mist, cloud, and drizzle. It had rained the greater part of the night. I decided to hunt, and we left the huts at seven o'clock, prepared to sleep on the tracks of a big bull if necessary.

We worked north-westward, on a line we had not hitherto taken. The hills were steep and severe. At nine o'clock we came to a sparkling stream in a deep ravine, and I halted for a breakfast of dates and stream water. All the different kinds of dried fruits are excellent and wholesome sustenance. I used to take a cup of tea on getting up in the morning, which is a capital thing to keep you going till breakfast, but water is the best drink with a meal. We went on again at 9.30, and at 10.15—after seeing herd tracks of the previous day—struck the morning's tracks of a solitary bull bison. These we took up, and at eleven o'clock sighted the bull about a hundred yards ahead walking slowly half left away from us. This was luck, since much of the jungle we had taken the tracks through was so thick and difficult, and impossible to see more than a few yards in, that if we had come near the bull in it he would have been bound to hear us and get warning. He gave no chance of a clear shot, however, at that distance, and I tried to approach nearer. But he walked on into thicker jungle and I failed to catch sight of him again for the time. So, after going slowly on in the direction I had last seen him for a few hundred yards, I called up the men to continue the tracking. In another ten minutes we saw the bamboos shaking seventy or eighty yards in front, and

knew the bull was there. Telling my men to stay where they were I went on by myself, and, moving very carefully, managed to arrive within forty yards of the bull. He was standing head away from me, and all I could see was the hindquarters and part of the back. To try to approach still nearer, or move to a side to obtain a flank shot, would probably have resulted in being seen or heard, and starting off the bull. It is a great point for the first shot to be a steady and deliberate one if possible. I waited a minute or two, and then—as the bull did not alter his position, and a change of air might have caused him to wind me any moment—I took aim near the root of the tail for the liver, and fired. At the shot the bull lumbered off, and I fired my left—a snap shot through the jungle. He was out of sight in a moment. I ran on, but did not view again. We found blood and took up the trail, determined to follow the bull for days if necessary. I led for some distance through very thick cover. There was very little blood, but the tracks in the soft ground were generally easy to see. After a time, as we did not come upon the bison, the tracker took up the trail again, closely followed by myself ready for instant action. I had fired at the bull about 11.30. About 1.30 we were walking along on the tracks, too quickly and carelessly. A wounded bison should be followed with due precaution. As we were going through some high grass in which we could not see five yards ahead, the bull suddenly charged us. The tracker jumped aside from in front of me and ran for the shelter of a tree we had just passed a few paces to our left, and the next moment the bull appeared coming straight on to me. I fired both barrels rapidly at him—his head being, I should think, about a yard from the muzzle of my rifle at the second shot—and sprang away to also run for the tree. But as I did so, I saw the bison drop on the place from where I had fired, struggling, roaring, and trying to rise. Reloading as quickly as possible I gave him a finisher in the chest.* A splendid black bull—the blackest I have ever seen. My first bullet had hit where I wanted, near the root of the tail, and probably penetrated the liver. Anyhow it was this shot that “brought to” the bison, since the second—fired as he went off—seemed to have missed. Of the two shots fired in a hurry as he charged, the first had grazed over the right horn five inches from its base, and the second—that dropped him—had taken effect slightly to the right of the central line of the forehead between the eyes, which

* My second rifle was left at home that day, its single-trigger action having got out of order.

was too low for the brain, in the position the head was held at that moment—that is, rather lowered, ready to use the horns. It should have hit about four inches higher. We found this bullet had passed on through the neck into the chest cavity. I was using the 100-750 cartridges with a .577 cordite rifle. A less powerful rifle (the brain being missed) might not have stopped the charge.

The bull measured full 18 hands at the shoulder, straight between uprights at withers and heel on the line of the fore leg. The head is the one shown in the frontispiece, and whose measurements are given in the early part of this chapter.

A dozen yards from where the bull fell I found the place (marked by blood) where he had turned in his tracks, and waited in the high grass to charge bravely against unknown odds.



CHAPTER XVI.

INDIAN BUFFALO.

Hindustāni - Bhainsa, Arna.

THE wild buffalo is more bulky than the bison and stands on shorter legs. Though not so high as the bison, he must weigh more.

Buffalo are found in the Cental Provinces east of the line of the Weinganga and Godāveri Rivers, and do not extend anywhere to the south of the Godāveri.

After a break formed by the cultivated plains of Bengal, they re-appear in the eastern part of the Terai and in Assam.

Forsyth says that buffalo and bison never interfere with each other, bison adhering to hilly tracks, while buffalo are essentially lovers of the plains, where the extensive swamps they delight in can be found.

My only experiences of wild buffalo have been in Ahiri and Bastar to either hand of the Indrawatti River; and there I have, as stated in the previous chapter, seen buffalo and bison on the same ground at elevations of 500 to 1000 feet. I came across no swamps in that part of the country. The buffalo usually drank at the river or its tributaries during the night—as was evident from their nightly tracks in the river-beds, and at earliest dawn made their way to where they intended to rest for the day, which was usually two or three miles from the river in high and dry jungle, or, if in the rainy season, as dry as might be found. I have even followed them in the hot weather over hilly, stony ground—a time of year it would hardly be supposed they would choose for such. I have been acquainted with their habits during most months, between January and August, in the course of several trips into Ahiri and Bastar, and have only once seen them acting in the manner agreeing with the usually (no doubt correctly) accepted idea of their habits—which shows they adapt themselves to their environment. The occasion I refer to was on a July day late in the forenoon

(about eleven o'clock, as well as I remember), when moving down the left bank of the Indrawatti, I saw a herd of which some were feeding on the opposite bank and others were lying in the water. I got as near as I could, but it was about 300 yards from bank to bank at this point, where the river was commencing to narrow and deepen before entering the Bhopalpatnam Hills. I hit a fine looking bull (with a '303), and before he disappeared with the herd he had once fallen on his head and recovered himself. I swam the river with a couple of my men on the chance of finding the buffalo dead a short way in the jungle; but there was very little blood and no sign that he would stop anywhere near. I had not been able to bring a rifle over, and the nearest village where a boat (dug-out) could have been obtained was ten miles away. So I re-swam the river and continued my march.

With regard to the use of the '303 on heavy game, I have killed both bison and buffalo with single shots from that rifle. On one occasion I killed two bull buffaloes, each with a single '303 Jeffery's slit bullet, hitting one on the shoulder, the other a good foot behind the shoulder (the bullet probably raking forward), at a range of about eighty yards. Both buffaloes dropped dead within 200 yards from where they were hit. Nevertheless, I do not believe in so small a bore for general use on heavy game. In the case mentioned when I fired across the river, I chose the '303 as being likely to make more accurate shooting at that distance than a larger bore.

The colour of the buffalo is a dark bluish-grey, deepening into black in old bulls.

Full-grown bulls, according to my experience, are 15.2 to 16.2 high. Both Forsyth and Kinloch express doubt as to any bulls being over 16 hands; but I have myself shot some 16.2, measured straight between uprights at withers and heel on the line of the fore leg, and two cows—15.2 and 15 hands.

The horns are large and corrugated, sweeping outwards, upwards, and backwards, for rather more than half their length, and then forward and inwards. This backward sweep causes them to lie almost along the animal's back when it stands at gaze, with head up and nose poked out. They are an earthy or rusty black colour, but polish as a trophy into a deep black, if so desired. The horns of cows are sometimes longer than those of bulls in Assam. Heads of the former are said to have been obtained over 13 feet from tip to tip, and of the latter over 12 feet, in that province, where buffaloes' horns run generally longer than in the Central Provinces. The horns of the two cows I shot were 83in. and 90in. respectively from tip to tip, the

smaller cow having therefore the longer horns. I did not take the base measure (cows' horns are thinner than bulls'), and have not the heads now in my possession.

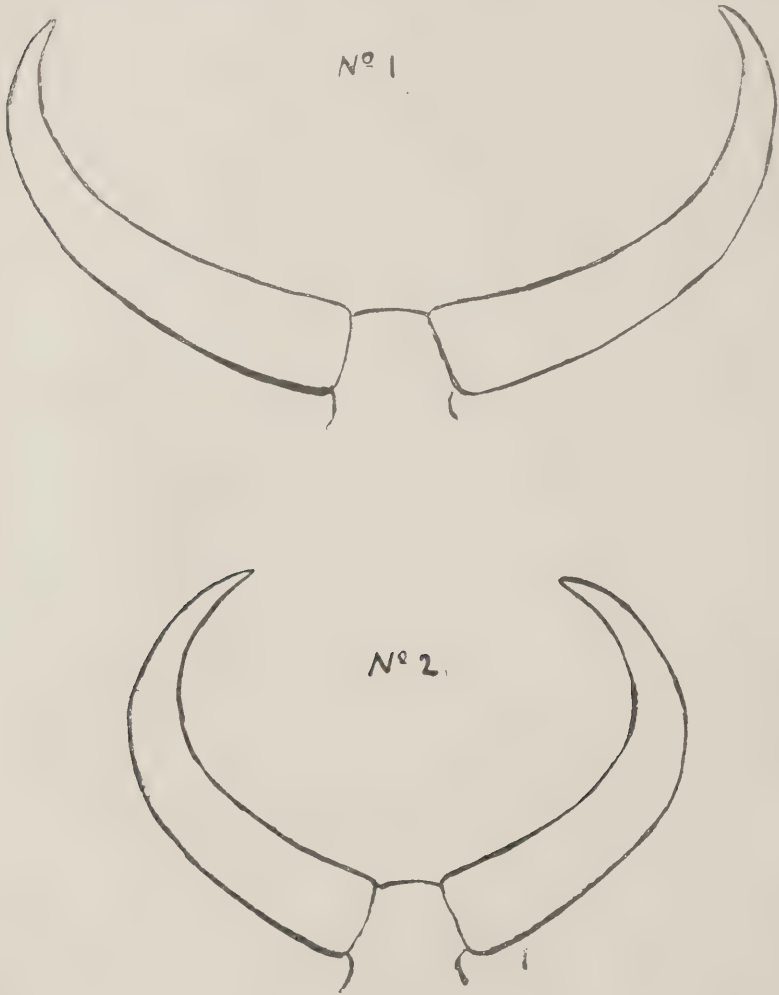


FIG. 21.

The outline illustrations given represent two different types, from heads of bulls I shot in Bastar—about sixteenth actual size.

No. 1 is my best head (shown in frontispiece), and measured from tip to tip (along outside curve and across forehead of bare skull)

108in.; between tips, 54½in.; circumference at base, each horn, 20in. The height at shoulder was 16.2.

The measurements of No. 2 were—tip to tip, 91in.; between tips, 24in.; circumference, each, 19in.; height at shoulder, 15.2.

I have killed a bull with slightly longer horns than No. 1, but not so thick.

Other measurements of big bulls were:—Kinloch's best (shot in the Bhutān Duars on the N.-W. border of Assam). Tip to tip, 99in. Forsyth's best (shot in the Central Provinces). Horns, each 46in. (which would make about 101in. from tip to tip over bare skull).

Further measurements of these two heads are not given. Regarding the latter, Forsyth expresses his opinion that the horns are nearly the extreme length attained in the Central Provinces. He was shooting with a companion, and they put sixteen bullets (mostly eight-bores) into the bull between them before killing him. He writes—"We were, however, shooting with bullets of plain lead, and I found that my first two-ounce ball, propelled by eight drachms of powder, had flattened out on his shoulder, pulverising the bones, however, and completely laming him. After this we shot with hardened projectiles."

Sanderson's best was a cow (shot in Eastern Bengal) with horns measuring 109in. tip to tip. He does not give the measurements of any bulls, but writes that he never saw a bull's horns so long as this cow's.

Buffalo occasionally raid cultivation, especially rice fields, though in Bastar and Ahiri I never heard of such a case.

Herds, according to my experience, usually number ten to thirty individuals.

Solitary bulls generally carry the best heads, but many such are doubtless only solitary for a time, as with elephants and bison. During one trip I came on a single big bull, or his tracks, several times in the same locality. The Mārias with me were certain he was the same one. Each time I found his tracks and followed them, he happened, when I came up, to be lying down in thick cover, and always heard me and was off without giving me a chance. Having thus twice seen and lost him besides coming on his older tracks on three different days, and always alone, in a period of about three weeks, I might fairly have put him down as a regular solitaire, if I had not followed him a third time, when on sighting him we found he had just joined a herd. I did not get him, however, missing clean by shooting high in some unaccountable way, and after this I was obliged to cross the

Indrawatti to commence my march to Chānda, so the bull lived (luckily unhurt) to roam the forests.

The only sound I ever heard a buffalo make while feeding was a cough, and this only once. It was sufficient, however, to guide us to the herd. We had at the time lost the tracks on hard ground, and were casting about for them.

On one occasion, soon after daybreak, I was watching some buffaloes swimming in the Indrawatti from an island to the opposite bank, and heard one bellow. This one was I think still on the island, and preparing to follow the others, but the early morning mists made it difficult to see them clearly, and I am not certain on this point.

The buffalo's senses of sight, hearing, and smell, are all acute.

Traces are cropped grass, dung, and tracks. Also their odour

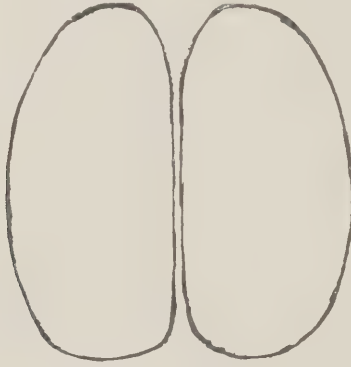


FIG. 22.

(like that of tame cattle), which I have occasionally noticed in places where a herd has been lying down.

The form of the track of a full-grown bull, if clearly imprinted, is as illustrated—about a quarter size.

I have not noticed any difference in fore and hind tracks, nor in the general form of those of bulls and cows, though the track of a big bull is larger than that of a cow.

Buffaloes, whether singly, in small parties, or in herds, all lie down a great deal during the day, trusting entirely to their senses of smell and hearing to detect the approach of an enemy. And they are wonderfully quick in doing so. I have followed up buffalo for hours, and then suddenly seen or heard them crash off in a moment or two, without giving a chance of a shot; they having been lying in high

grass and heard my approach, from as far as a hundred yards or more. In fact, they are so vigilant, even in remote forests, where it might be supposed they could be little disturbed, that it is most difficult, as a rule, to be successful with them, except in the rains, when the ground and jungle allow of nearly noiseless walking.

It is as well to run after buffaloes when you have alarmed or fired at them, though they go faster than bison and rarely stop to look back. I remember, however, two bulls I had fired at, stopping and turning broadside to me to look back, before they had gone fifty yards, giving me further easy shots, which ended in my bagging one of them.

In taking up the tracks of wounded or alarmed buffalo, the same remarks apply that I made regarding elephants in this matter.

I killed the first wild buffalo I ever saw, and he possessed the longest horns of any that I subsequently shot. The month was May, and I was camped on the right bank of the beautiful Indrawatti river in the southern part of the Ahiri Zamindāri. On both sides of the river extended limitless virgin forest. I had a boat (two dug-outs lashed together), so could hunt where I liked on either side. This particular morning I was out on the Ahiri side. The forest was open at this time of the year (before the commencement of the rains), but the ground was very hard for tracking. However, we were not obliged to do any, for we had the good luck to sight a big solitary bull buffalo near some pools. I managed to approach within sixty yards and obtained a fair shot at his shoulder with my Express (a black powder '577). The instant after I fired I ran forward and saw the bull making off through the trees. Running hard after him, on coming to a clearer part I found the bull only fifty yards in front of me, staggering along, evidently hard hit. I gave him my left in the loins at an angle from one side, then took the eight-bore from my gunbearer and continued the pursuit. I had not run many yards further when the bull turned and faced me, head slightly lowered. I pulled up short, and we stood looking at each other for a few moments about fifty yards apart. I then levelled the eight-bore and aimed full at the bull's head. The bullet struck too low (just under the line of the eyes), and on receiving it the bull turned and staggered off. As I ran on after him he commenced again to turn towards me, but as he came round I gave him the left well on the shoulder and dropped him. A splendid buffalo, 16.2 in height, with horns measuring 111 in. from tip to tip, and 18 in. in circumference.

A month later, hunting between the Indrawatti and Bāndia Rivers, on a rainy morning in June, I found the fresh tracks of another big

solitary bull, and followed them up. They led us towards the Bāndia, crossed that river (which was not more than knee deep), and went on into the forest to the further (west) side. About half an hour after crossing the river, we sighted the buffalo, lying down half turned away from us, some 150 yards off. Favoured by a mound, and accompanied by a Māria carrying the eight-bore, I got within eighty yards of the bull. As I was about to take my shot with the Express, he rose, but before he was well on his feet I fired at his shoulder, and then taking the eight-bore obtained two more shots as he lumbered away. We found blood and, following up, soon saw the bull again, and got in another bullet from the heavy rifle, hearing its thud. Half an hour after this the blood ceased, but the ground was good for tracking so it did not much matter. The trail led back towards the Bāndia. In another half hour we neared the river, and I ran on with one of the Mārias, while the others held to the tracks. On gaining the river's bank—here rather high on both sides—we saw the buffalo beneath us, just commencing to cross the river. I opened fire with the eight-bore, and then with the Express, hitting several times. The buffalo staggered to the shots, and, the bank on the other (east) side proving too much for him, he lay down in a pool close under it. I crossed the river, and, getting on to the bank above the buffalo, finished him off. A very fine bull, a good 16 hands high, with horns measuring (tip to tip) 10 in. and in circumference, each, 20 in. A massive head.

Some years later I was again in the Indrawatti country, and had pitched my tents in the hunter's paradise I mentioned in the previous chapter.

On that red-letter day, the first part of which I described, I went on, after shooting the two bull bison, for further hunting—it being still early in the morning. About nine o'clock we found fresh tracks of two bull buffalo, and followed them up. It was very hot and our water had given out, when most luckily we came to a pool in a nullah. We could hardly have worked on but for this. Having refreshed and rested by the pool a little time, we took up the trail again, and soon found the buffaloes had separated. We followed the larger tracks and in less than half a mile from the pool came upon the buffalo standing about fifty yards off. We crouched, I could get no clear view. In a little time he lay down turned away from us, with head upwind. I crawled towards him through the long grass with the eight-bore. After crawling about ten yards I raised myself slowly, and could make out the horns and (indistinctly) the head. I should have waited till he rose or have approached nearer, but fired, aiming

below the horns at what I judged was the middle of the back of the head, and up started the buffalo and crashed away, the smoke preventing the use of the left barrel at the moment. Running hard after him for a hundred yards or so, I got another shot (giving him my left) as he pulled up about eighty yards from me, luckily offering a clear shot at the shoulder. At this he was off again and disappeared. Following on we found blood, though not much, and in a few hundred yards sighted the bull going slowly. I ran in to forty or fifty yards and gave him two more with the eight-bore. He then faced me. His appearance was formidable. Reloading the eight-bore, close to a tree, with the only cartridge I now had left for it, I fired into the bull's shoulder as he turned and walked on again. He then lay down. I was obliged to finish him with a .303 rifle, having left the Express at home that day. The bull died with great dignity, his head drooping slowly till it rested on the ground, but the body remaining up, in the position a buffalo lies down when alive. Like most of his kind I have killed, from first to last he never uttered a sound. He was a grand old bull.

The measurements are those of the head shown in the frontispiece, given in the early part of this chapter.

A noteworthy point is that my first shot, fired at the back of the head, missed, and the bull was really secured by the second shot, gained by hard running.

A week or so after this I had moved a few miles further south, and was camped on the left bank of the Indrawatti, near a little Māria hamlet of some half dozen dilapidated looking huts, which I found deserted on a subsequent visit. One July morning about seven o'clock I crossed the river in a dug-out, to hunt on the Ahiri side. The river, swollen by the rains, was more than half a mile wide. It took us nearly twenty minutes to paddle over. We made a round through some low hills a mile or mile and half from the river. The country, as everywhere else, was forest-covered. About 10.30 we found the night's tracks of a solitary bull buffalo, and followed them up. In half an hour, while we were rather puzzling over the trail which wound and circled here and there where the bull had been feeding, we suddenly hit upon his quite fresh tracks entering a thick piece of cover. The morning was close and heavy without a breath of air stirring. Leaving the men outside, I made a careful entry into this cover with the eight-bore, keeping a sharp look-out step by step, and caught sight of the buffalo lying down not twenty-five yards off. I could just make out his black hide in the thick jungle, but could obtain no clear shot, so lay down and wormed myself on nearer. When I had crawled

within fifteen yards of the bull, he began snorting, and I knew he was on the alert, so got ready, and as he rose broadside to me, gave him my right, judging for the shoulder, though I could see no part of the animal distinctly through the cover. After firing I jumped up and saw the bull standing facing me—head lowered. I gave him the left on the back of the neck in front of the withers (the neck being exposed on account of the lowered head), and then cleared away to one side. As I did so I heard a faint death-bellow and knew it was all right. Reloading and going forward, I found the buffalo down, but not dead, and gave him a finisher. A very fine old bull. The first bullet was well planted on the shoulder, but had first cut through a sapling an inch in diameter (at the point cut) before reaching the buffalo. The bullet was a spherical, and such is much less easily deflected by intervening jungle than a conical.

The measurements were—tip to tip, 95in. ; between tips, 29½in. ; circumference, each, 18in. ; height, 16.2.

I have killed several other big bulls, but the experiences given will no doubt suffice.



CHAPTER XVII.

YĀK.

Tibetan - - - - - Donkh.

THE wild yāk is an inhabitant of Tibet, especially of the desolate, storm-swept "Chāng" (the great Central Tibetan plateau), the only part of this earth over which still hangs to a large degree the mystery of the Unknown; and which, on account of its great altitude and consequently severe climate, is uninhabitable by man. You may march for a month on this, the most elevated tract of country in the world, at a daily average of over 17,000 feet, as shown by Bower's table of heights made during his explorations.

Bower, Deasy, Wellby, and other explorers found considerable numbers of yāk on the Chāng. A few make their way westward along the southern border of Khotan, and into Lādāk in the region north of the Pangong Lake. They are generally found at elevations between 17,000 and 19,000 feet. They seem impervious to cold, and do not take any trouble to shelter themselves from bad weather. Deasy relates he once saw some lying down on the very summit of a high exposed ridge in a fierce gale of driving snow, when by moving a short way down the lee side they would have been a good deal sheltered.

The wild yāk is a deep black all over with the exception of some grey about the muzzle. Apart from its superior size, this differentiates it from tame yāk, which are parti-coloured—generally black and white.

The bulls are very massively made, standing on short legs, 15 to 16 hands in height. There is a good deal of woolly hair over the forehead and top of the neck, hump, and back. The lower part of the shoulders, flanks, and quarters are covered with long hair, coming down to the knees and hocks. Between the woolly hair of the back and the long hair of the lower part of the flanks the hair is short and fine. The tail is bushy. Tame yāks' tails are well known in Indian

bazaars in the form of the "Chowri," used for switching away flies. The hump is high and pronounced, with a marked drop of the neck from it, so that the head is usually held low.

Cows are much smaller than bulls, and their horns are very inferior.

The horns are black, slightly corrugated for six or seven inches from the base, and then smooth, with a sweep outwards, upwards, forwards, and inwards—the tips inclining backwards.

The illustration of a yāk's head is from a photograph of one in my possession—that of a bull I shot on the Lādāk-Khotan border. The horns are chipped a few inches from the points, as if an outer layer of horn over the tips had been broken off them.

The measurements were—tip to tip (over bare skull), 65in.; between tips, 15in.; outside span, 29 $\frac{3}{4}$ in.; circumference, right horn, 13 $\frac{1}{4}$ in., left, 13in.; height, 15 hands.

The smallest girth round neck was 4ft., and the smallest behind the shoulders, 6ft. 11in.; taken with a fairly tight tape over the hair. The length from nose to root of tail was 8ft. 4in., and the tail, 2ft. 10in.

The measure from nose to root of tail was straight between uprights—the head being pulled as straight as possible with the line of the back. This—the correct way—does not of course give so long a measure as by running the tape along the curves from nose to tail of any animal, as is frequently done. The different ways of measuring, in fact, make most records valueless for comparison, since the methods by which they were gained are rarely detailed.

Another bull I killed at the same time measured—tip to tip, 57 $\frac{1}{2}$ in.; between tips, 18 $\frac{1}{2}$ in.; outside span, 27 $\frac{1}{2}$ in.; circumference, right horn, 13 $\frac{1}{4}$ in., left, 14in.; height, 15.2 $\frac{1}{2}$.

The smallest girths round neck and behind the shoulders were 3ft. 9 $\frac{1}{2}$ in. and 7ft. 5 $\frac{1}{2}$ in. respectively.

The length from nose to root of tail was 8ft. 3in., and the tail 2ft. 6in.

Captain Rawling, in his book "The Great Plateau," records the following measurements of a big bull:—

	ft. in.		ft. in.
Height at shoulder	5 9	Girth of body.....	8 9
Total length.....	11 9	Girth of neck at thickest part...	6 8
Length of muzzle to root of tail	8 8	Girth of neck at thinnest part...	4 1
Length of tail	3 1	Length of horns ..	2 9
Length of face	2 3	Circumference of horns at base	1 5



YAK.

This bull's height was therefore measured 17.1. The manner of measuring the height and the body length is not stated. The girth of body is presumably that at the largest part. The length of horns given would make the tip to tip measurement about 76in.

Captain Deasy, in his work "In Tibet and Chinese Turkestan," records the head of a very big solitary bull—the bulkiest he or his men had ever seen—as, each horn, 25½in. (which would make the tip to tip measurement about 61in.); between tips, 17in.; circumference, each horn, 13in.

Kinloch does not give the measurements of a bull he shot in the Kyobrang Valley.

Rawling states the cows usually calve in June.

According to Deasy and Rawling, herds usually number ten to fifty individuals, and old bulls are found singly or in twos and threes.

Bower saw large numbers within view at the same time. He describes a scene on the Aru Cho Lake (July 20th, 1891) in the western part of the Chāng, in these words:—"Over a pass, 17,876 feet, and then down a long narrow valley which suddenly debouches on Lake Aru Cho (17,150 feet)—a fine sheet of water running north and south, salt like nearly all the Tibetan lakes, and of a deep blue colour. To the south-west and north-west some fine snowy mountains rise up into the blue sky, while on the east low, undulating barren-looking hills are seen. In every direction antelope and yāk in incredible numbers were seen, some grazing, some lying down. No trees, no signs of man, and this peaceful-looking lake, never before seen by a European eye, seemingly given over as a happy grazing ground to the wild animals. A sportsman's paradise."

According to my own experience, obtained in July and August in a tract where yāk were comparatively scarce, old bulls (singly or in couples) lie down the greater part of the day high up (perhaps between 19,000 and 20,000 feet) on some absolutely barren mountain side of stones and shale, whence they can command miles of ground. Towards evening they descend to feed on the coarse grass growing on the lower parts of the hill, and, as darkness falls, they make their way into the upper valleys, where a richer pasturage is found on the grassy flats occurring along most of the streams in Tibet, and whose green contrasts so strongly with the general brown and grey of the desolate scenery around. A few hours after daybreak they leave the lower ground and make their way again high up the mountains.

I have never heard wild yāk make any kind of sound. Regarding the Latin name of the species, Captain Rawling writes:—"as the wild

yāk never grunts (that accomplishment being confined to the tame variety), it is ridiculous to apply to it the adjective 'grunniens.'"

I used to question a Lādāki who accompanied me in my hunting, and who had some experience of yāk-shooting with other sportsmen, as to his opinion of the yāk's senses of sight and scent. He thought the animal might see you half a mile away, if you were on exposed ground, and might wind you three-quarters of a mile off with the wind blowing straight from you to it. These distances I made out by pointing to some object and asking the man if yāk would generally see or wind you so far, as he had no idea of what a mile meant, or distances in hundreds of yards.

Captain Rawling, however, credits the yāk with much greater powers of scent than this. He gives his opinion of the yāk's senses in the following words:—"The eyesight of the daunk is commonly believed to be bad, but it is really excellent, and many a fine beast owes his life to this fallacy. Their powers of hearing are only fair, but it is in their marvellous gift of scent that they surpass all animals on the Chāng; they can wind a man at a distance of four or five miles."

It is a pity Captain Rawling does not give some examples from personal observations as to this wonderful power of scent, or say on what he bases his opinion.

Kinloch describes the foot of the yāk as large; and the track nearly as large as that of a camel. I do not consider this description applicable. The yāk is a mountain animal, and his feet are compact and small for his size, like those of the bison. They are, in fact, about the same size and form, and the illustration of the tracks given for bison, will serve for those of the yāk.

The size of the feet of the two bulls I shot (both big ones) was as follows:—

No. 1—Length of fore foot, 6in.; width, $4\frac{3}{4}$ in. Length of hind foot, $5\frac{1}{2}$ in.; width, $4\frac{1}{4}$ in.

No. 2—Length of fore foot, $5\frac{1}{2}$ in.; width, 5in. Length of hind foot, $4\frac{3}{4}$ in.; width, $4\frac{1}{4}$ in.

The width was taken at the broadest part.

The expansion of the foot in walking would make the track a little broader than the actual foot measurement. I found tracks of bull yāks I followed averaged about $5\frac{1}{2}$ in. wide.

The tracks showed fairly well on the soft kind of gravelly soil that prevailed, and though often lost on grass or stones, were invariably recovered by a judicious cast forward on more favourable ground. The three times that I followed tracks of bulls, my two Lādāki



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trackers (named Siring and Gyartso) never permanently lost the trail, and we always in the end sighted the yāk.

Their large size and deep black colour make them prominent objects, easily seen at a considerable distance in the clear atmosphere of Thibet, and a first-rate target for even long range shooting.

The wind is a difficulty in approaching game in Thibet, as it may change several times in a few minutes, owing to the influence of the elevation, and branch nullahs or other local conformation of the ground where you happen to be.

A few years ago I made an expedition specially to obtain a bull yāk. I started from Srinagar and travelled by the trade route over the Zogi La Pass to Leh, sixteen marches. There are rest houses at every stage and transport can be hired from day to day, or for as many days as may be necessary to reach the stage where next it will be procurable. At Leh I laid in supplies, saw to a few necessary matters, and moved to Tānkse with transport engaged as far as that place—five marches over the Chāng La Pass, 17,600 feet. At Tānkse I engaged men and transport for the time I might be away (three months), laid in further supplies, bought livestock (sheep and goats), and completed my arrangements for the plunge into the uninhabited wilderness to the north-east, which was to be my general direction.

After passing the western end of the Pangong Lake I crossed a pass to the east, not shown on the Government map ("Indian Atlas" sheet), but which, judging by known marked elevations, was probably about 17,500 feet high, and proceeded by the Niāgzū valley and the Lādāk-Tibet frontier towards the Kepsang La Pass. My men professed ignorance of this part of the country, and I had to find my way by map and compass. The chief anxiety was grass; but though meeting with barren stretches, we always came on grass at some time of the day, sufficient to graze our animals. Regarding water, there were streams in every valley; and the scanty boortsa scrub on the hill sides supplied us with fuel. We occasionally saw antelope and kiāng, and I shot a few of the former for meat. I sometimes found them very wild, going away on seeing us at perhaps half a mile off, and at other times (though more seldom) comparatively tame, allowing me within 250 yards by simply walking quietly in their direction so as to pass them within that distance. The ground they affect is generally too open to admit of stalking, though chances by means of stream banks or undulations occasionally occur.

The illustration is from a photograph of a head in my possession, measuring 21 $\frac{3}{4}$ in., shot during this expedition. They go up to 25 in.

The *kiāng* also vary very much in their degrees of shyness. They will occasionally keep well out of reasonable shot (at a distance of a quarter of a mile or more), and other times come galloping up in troops of twenty or thirty and halt within 150 yards of your line of march to look at you—then wheel round and gallop away to (it may be) repeat the performance farther on.

One day we sighted three fine-looking *nyān* rams nearly a mile off. They were moving slowly away, having probably seen us first. I did not like to delay my search for *yāk* by staying to hunt them, though I have never obtained a good *nyān* head. Another day near the top of a pass we saw a grey wolf which trotted past us within 400 yards. They are rarely seen. The weather was very bad on the whole, with frequent thunderstorms, and hail and sleet driven by strong winds.

Near the Kepsang La Pass I was met by a Tibetan patrol who denied me further progress. We first saw them a mile or more away, riding down the valley towards us. I was walking at the time; Siring and Gyartso were leading the ponies. On arriving at about fifty yards from us the Tibetans—three men, apparently unarmed—dismounted and approached. Their chief was a large man in a dark red coat with a red ball on his cap, denoting an official. He said that they could not allow any "*sāhib*" to go on further: that if they did they would be executed by orders from *Lhāsa*, either by having their heads cut off or by being shot. I knew it was useless to endeavour to continue my march in this direction, as the party that stopped me would be reinforced if necessary. The best thing to do was to appear to give in entirely to them, so as to shake off their observation the sooner. I therefore assured them I did not wish to give them any trouble and would return the way I had come the next day, but at the same time expressed my opinion that this was Kashmir territory. This the man in red would not allow. I asked how he had heard of my coming; for they had met me some miles west of the pass, and I judged their headquarters to be near the Treb Lake, fifteen or twenty miles east of it. According to Gyartso, who was interpreter, he said that a man—who with others was bringing a flock of sheep and goats from *Lādāk* by this route—had heard of my intention near the Pangong Lake to go by *Niāgzū*, and, thinking I perhaps intended to cross the Kepsang La, had left the flock and travelled quickly all the way to give warning to the Tibetans on the other side of the pass. This showed how they were helped by the people of the country (the informer I understand was a *Lādāki*) in ascertaining the probable movements of any European travellers.

In fact, the Lhāsa Government has organised for many years a very complete system of frontier posts extending for over a thousand miles along their frontier, and preventing the entry of any white man into Tibet from the side of India. On the uninhabited parts of the border the guards live in tents or stone shelters, and have their supplies sent them and are regularly relieved at stated periods, but I imagine some of the more remote ones are withdrawn altogether during the winter. The Kepsang post, however, is the furthest one established northwards. Bower and other explorers entered Tibet by the Lanak La Pass, which is only about twenty miles north of the Kepsang La as the crow flies, though it would probably be fifty miles to march it.

As I had travelled a good distance that day, I camped for the night; the patrol pitching a little tent within 200 yards of mine.

I made two marches westward, being followed and kept in observation the first day by the Tibetans. On the second day I found I was no longer followed, so the next morning resumed my march in a northerly direction.

I crossed the Lanak La valley, and a pass which I estimated at over 19,000 feet, and settled down by the end of July to work a range on the Khotan border, running east and west, in one of the southern nullahs of which we had, for the first time, come upon traces of wild yāk, namely dung two or three days old.

I commenced operations by camping in this nullah (the tents more or less concealed from view in a fold of the hill), and examining it up to its head without finding fresher traces, though a good many of older dates, in the shape of dung from a few days to perhaps two months old, showing we had hit on frequented ground. I noticed distinct paths traversing the nullah, made in Siring's opinion by yāk and antelope, since no men, he said, ever travelled this way.

While returning home we were overtaken by a violent hailstorm, with stones of such a size that I was glad of the protection of the "Cawnpore Tent Club" hat* I was wearing, on which they fell with great force and noise.

Men were out in observation early the next morning, and on looking out of my tent a little after daybreak I found there had been a fall of snow during the night. The hills and valley were white, and there was about two inches of it over the tent. Certain rocky and other parts of the hills showed through the snow, also the stonier parts

* A popular helmet-shaped "pigsticking" hat, affording good protection to the head either from the sun or from a fall.

of the valley, and the bigger grass tufts, but generally speaking it was quite a winter landscape. About seven o'clock Siring reported he had come upon the night's or early morning's tracks of two yāks, which had crossed the valley lower down than camp and had gone up a side nullah to the west. I decided to follow these tracks if possible, or hunt in the direction they led. As we were about to start it commenced to snow again, and seemed very threatening all round. So I waited to see if it looked like clearing or was likely to snow all day, and had my breakfast in camp. After breakfast it cleared, and we made a start about nine o'clock. I took two other men with me besides Siring and Gyartso, and two ponies—one to ride, and one to carry our things for the day. We picked up the tracks and followed them, finding the night's and early morning's dung occasionally. I rode as much as possible, keeping a hundred yards behind Siring and Gyartso, who did the tracking and scouting. The led pony was 100 to 200 yards behind me. Siring had my big glasses. The tracks led up the side nullah on to the highest ridges. We must have been working at over 18,000 feet most of the day, and sometimes at about 19,000. At this height I found it impossible to walk up any rise except very slowly, stopping for breath every few yards. Though I rode as much as possible, the ground we went over was sometimes so steep that a pony could not negotiate it with safety when ridden, and I was then obliged to walk. I found it very exhausting. At midday it came on to hail and sleet with a driving wind. We were nearing the top of a high ridge on its lee side at the time, but did not cross it, and took shelter on its slope, considering it no good going on when the driving cloud and sleet prevented us from seeing anything clearly. After an hour it turned to snow, but by two o'clock cleared again. The sun came out and we crossed the ridge and worked on. The ground passed over all day was very bad going—shale and loose stones, large and small, with sharp edges, calculated to quickly wear out any boots. The tracks sometimes followed regular beaten paths made by yāk, which zigzagged up and down the steep slopes in a scientific way like paths I found on the steep Burmese hills made by elephant and bison.

At 4 p.m. we sighted the two yāks lying down in a nullah about a mile and half away. My first sight of wild yāk. There were two branch nullahs between ourselves and the game. The easiest approach would have been by the main nullah, but the wind would then have been at our backs blowing right up the nullah, so we had to go higher up over these branch nullahs. Crossing them was

desperate hard work for me, most of the ground being too steep to ride. At last we arrived at the ridge overlooking the nullah in which were the yāk, only to see them no longer lying down but moving up the next steep hill side about half a mile away. It was now five o'clock. They had not winded or seen us, and moved leisurely up the steep, shaly slope, westward. Two good bulls Siring considered them. I was too done to follow them any further, and if we had we should not have got back to camp by nightfall.

I asked Siring, who had some experience of wild yāk, where we might expect to find them next day, but he seemed to think it hopeless to look for them again. He said that in his opinion they were making for the next valley westward over the high range in front of us—in fact, that they were travellers. When they had disappeared over the ridge they had been climbing up we made for camp. I had had enough by the time we reached it. Two cups of hot tea revived me. I could not have got through the day without a pony.

My later experience with yāk has shown me it was a mistake to give up these two bulls. I should have moved camp the next day to the nullah we had seen them in (a round of ten or twelve miles perhaps for the transport), and taken on their tracks day after day in this manner till I came up with them, unless barred by ground too difficult for even lightly loaded pack animals.

I remained two more days in my nullah, watching it with look-outs. Nothing was seen, and no further traces found. I tried to discover a practicable way for my transport over the range northward from the head of the nullah, but without success. I then loaded up and moved round into the next nullah to the east. About two miles up it bifurcated, one branch coming from the north-east, the other from the north, roughly. Here I camped by some grass. A move of six or seven miles. We saw antelope, but I did not want to make a noise by firing, in case there might be any yāk within hearing.

We stayed in this nullah two days, examining both the upper branches to their heads for yāk or sign, but we found only old traces—dung from perhaps one to several months old. These upper nullahs were well grassed for a mile or two from camp, after which they became bare shale and stone like the mountain sides above them. However, all the nullahs were well watered, each having its stream springing from its head and running down to meet those of the other branch nullahs.

On the third morning of our stay here we found the night's tracks of a solitary bull about a mile below camp and followed them up.

They were fairly plain in the gravelly soil, and led us into the main valley along the south of the range eastward, crossing the spurs coming down from the north side, till they went over the shoulder of a large spur northward into a nullah of the range. There was a good deal of grass in this nullah. Siring and Gyartso had been able to take these tracks on all this way (six or seven miles) owing to the gravelly soil. The toe imprints were wide and rounded. I measured the track of a fore foot at its widest, $5\frac{3}{4}$ in. Only at one point (after following the tracks four or five miles) did the men have a difficulty in taking them on, and that was at the mouth of a nullah where the bull had stopped to feed on the grass along the stream there. While they were unravelling the tracks I ate my tiffin, and on the trail being found to continue eastward over the next spur, I sent a man back to camp to order it to come on as quickly as possible to this nullah. It was then 3 p.m., and I judged the caravan would arrive by nine. When we had tracked the bull to the summit of the spur over which he had gone into the nullah mentioned, we sat down to examine the nullah as far as possible, and soon made out the yāk through the glasses, lying down, high up at one of the head branches of it, more than two miles away. The position he had chosen commanded any line of approach that was practicable for us during the time of day remaining. It was 4 p.m. when we sighted the bull. So we watched to see what line he would take when he got up. There was a bitter gale blowing over the exposed spur, and it was cold work. Both Siring and Gyartso—hardy Lādākis as they were—evidently felt it. The yāk did not move till six o'clock, and then went slowly down the nullah till hidden from sight by one of its spurs. This was so far satisfactory that we might hope to find him in the nullah or one of its branches the next day, and we made our way back to the place to which I had ordered camp. We arrived there as it was growing dusk—7.30. There was no sign of our caravan, though we could see a long distance down the valley. The bitter gale continued to blow. I sat under the lee of some rocks. The men lit a fire of boorsta, and we waited a couple of hours. I then sent them to go some way down the valley and shout for our people. It began to sleet and continued doing so for several hours. I took occasional nips of brandy. It was no use walking to keep warm: I was warmer (or rather not so cold) under my rock shelter than if walking in the wind and sleet. The caravan did not arrive till 11 p.m.; camp was ready by midnight. One of the men suddenly became ill and rolled about on the ground groaning. Nobody could understand what

was the matter with him, and apparently he could explain nothing—only groan and writhe. Siring and another put him in a tent and “malished” him. I gave him a glass of ginger wine and brandy. This potent and pleasant medicine had a good effect: in a short time he was quiet and was quite well the next day.

In the morning after breakfast I started to look for the yāk. We again examined the nullah from the spur we sighted the bull from the day before, but could not find him. We then went over several spurs of the nullah northward, examining it and its branches. As much of the ground was not rideable this was very exhausting for me, and at last I said I would cross no more of these steep, stony, and shaly spurs, but go down into the main nullah and work up it till we came to that part into which we had seen the bull descend the previous evening, and then endeavour to pick up his tracks. So we descended into the nullah. As we worked up it, Siring, who was leading, suddenly sighted the yāk in a grassy branch nullah which joined the main one about a mile below the point at which he had been lying down the day before. We took cover at once and then went up this branch nullah. The yāk was probably a quarter of a mile up it when Siring sighted him. The wind was right at first, blowing down the nullah in our faces. After we had gone a few hundred yards, every moment expecting to see the yāk over one of the transverse ridges between the hill side and the bottom of the nullah, the wind changed and blew up the nullah straight from behind our backs. The bull would be sure to wind us, so I told Siring to sit down, and hurried on myself for a shot. In less than a minute I saw the yāk moving up the opposite hill side over 400 yards away. He had winded us. I lay down and tried to get my rifle on him, but could not in my breathless state. By the time I was steadier he was out of reasonable shot. I dislike long shots. It generally means missing, or the animal getting away wounded. I did not fire, and the bull was soon high up the hill. But thinking over the matter afterwards I came to the conclusion I ought to have opened fire. The hill side would have shown me the strike of my bullets, a yāk offers a big black mark, and I might have fired a dozen or more shots before he was hopelessly out of range, as he could not move fast up the steep hill. Moreover, it was my only chance, as I could not hope to see the bull again. He had winded us and was heading to cross the great range northwards, over which I could not have followed him. So for some days I chewed the cud of bitter reflection.

Two days after this disappointment (it was now August) I

continued moving eastward. It was a bitterly cold morning with a searching wind and a cloudy sky. The water in the pail was frozen. I could not get warm ; hot tea, hot breakfast, keeping under the blankets as much as possible till I dressed—all were of no avail. I was afraid of the cold affecting the smokeless powder of the .405 Winchester cartridges I used, and so always had a packet in bed with me, as the best way of keeping them warm during the night. My cook, through continual practice, became a first-rate "high altitude" artist. He could cook in a gale of wind and driving sleet at 18,000 feet, with the aid of the shelter of his tent door flaps ; and always brought me my meals hot and frizzling on the frying pan, or in the saucepan, with hot plates to transfer them to in my tent, racing backwards and forwards with the things between his fire and my tent.* We struck camp and started this particular morning about 8.30, making a long march to cross a gently sloping pass that closed the valley to the east. I wished to see the country on the other side. On arriving at the top of the pass another wide valley stretching eastward came into view, till lost in the haze of the distance (thirty to forty miles) amongst rounded hills and sugar-loaf shaped peaks of various hues—red, yellow, grey, and purple predominating. The mountains on the south side were high, steep, and covered with snow : those on the north, lower, with more gradual slopes, and little snow. On the top of the pass (probably over 19,000 feet) there was no snow, but patches of it lay a short way up to either hand. A stream, springing from the eastern slope of the pass, wound down the centre of the valley with grassy flats on either bank, here and there dotted with antelope.

Looking at this view, a strong desire possessed me to march down this long valley, on and on, into the unknown land before me. I had not the means or time then to penetrate far into it, but I thought I would at least go a few marches, and perhaps see great herds of yāk and antelope, as described by Tibetan explorers. However, these were but visions, for the next morning, on giving the word to load up, the men refused to accompany me any further eastward, and it became evident that I if got a yāk it would be in the range westward in which I had been working. I remained a few days on the eastern side of the pass looking for yāk sign, but without success, only finding some

* Both he and my bearer were, I believe, "Argoons" (or half-castes from short marriages between Turkestan merchants and Lādāki women), engaged by me at Leh, where all my Kashmir servants "went sick" or refused to go further. I left Leh with an entirely new set of men. Argoons have the reputation of being very hardy.

old dung in a nullah on the northern side of the valley. So I recrossed the pass, taking a last look from its summit at the beckoning scene to the east, and, moving westward, examined nullahs day by day of the northern range that I had hitherto not entered. But we found nothing till we arrived at the mouth of the nullah in which we had first discovered yāk sign. While waiting here for the caravan to come up, Siring sighted some antelope through the glasses a mile or more away down the valley, and after our people arrived and I had pointed out the place where I wished to camp, we went to see if there was a good buck amongst the antelope. On the way, however, we came upon what were considered the night's or previous day's tracks of wild yāk leading down the valley westward, and I thought no more about the antelope. There were the tracks of several animals, but in another hundred yards they all turned northwards, except one—the largest—that continued down the valley. This was pronounced a bull and we followed him. The tracks led us a mile or so down the valley, and then turned up a nullah north-west for three to four miles, when we lost them on stony ground. We had only once found dung, and that seemed two days old. It was too late to cast forward very far to pick up the tracks again in better ground, but we concluded the yāk would probably be in one of the branch nullahs further on, and decided to move camp to a convenient situation whence the nullahs could be examined. We returned home by a short cut over a spur, and the next morning struck camp and moved to the place where we had lost the tracks. Having pointed out the site for the tents I started with Siring, Gyartso, and another man to hunt for the yāk. I took two ponies, one to ride, and one to carry our things. We soon recovered the tracks. They led us a mile further up the nullah, and then turned up a branch nullah northward—a fine, grassy one. We came on dung of the previous day. Sometimes the tracking was difficult on account of the long stretches of grass by the stream, where the bull had wandered about feeding. The grass did not show much track as a rule. But Siring and Gyartso always picked it up again further on where the ground became shaly or gravelly for a time. There were other tracks and dung of several dates, and these also gave the men some difficulty in keeping on the right trail. At last, after careful tracking some four miles up this nullah, we found our bull had been joined by another, and shortly came upon dung pronounced to be of the morning. This was more hopeful. The order of march was as follows:—Siring and Gyartso tracking and scouting in front; I and my pony 100 to 150 yards behind them,

riding when the ground permitted it; and the man with the led pony about 200 yards behind myself.

The tracks now went up a side ravine to the west. At this point I sent the man leading the pack pony to order up our camp to the junction of this ravine. The pony was hobbled and turned loose to graze, and its pack placed on the ground. I put my "British Warm"* coat on my saddle under the surcingle, and my brandy flask in my pocket, but all other extra things were left behind. Then we ascended the ravine—Siring and Gyartso in front, and I riding in rear of them. On gaining the top of the head of the ravine or gulley, we found the tracks led down a gulley on the west side of the ridge, that was too steep either to ride or for me to walk up on return to camp by that way if necessary. As before stated, I found I could not walk up hills at this elevation. While we were looking about and thinking what to do, we saw two yāks trot up the nullah we had just left, and go on towards its head. They must have been disturbed to be going so fast, and had probably seen or winded the man I had sent to bring up camp. I opined these were the two yāks we were after, who, having gone down the western side of the ridge, had returned over it by another ravine or gully to the south into the nullah again. We worked up the nullah after them, going at first over several spurs by yāk paths along the steep slopes, whence a good view was obtainable. On these spurs at a height of certainly over 19,000 feet, a number of pretty blue flowers were growing. I gathered some to send to my wife on opportunity occurring, as I considered they must be a rare kind to be growing at such a height.

Not seeing the yāks, we ultimately descended into the nullah and picked up their tracks again. When we had gone another mile or two up it, and arrived in quite the upper, barren part of the nullah, under the summit of the great ridge dividing us from Khotan, it commenced (about 4 p.m.) to hail and sleet. This, with the storm in our faces, made it difficult to see; nevertheless, Siring, looking through the glasses at a lucky moment, said he saw something black in the nullah, just beyond a small spur from the hill side. I took the glasses but could not have said what it was: Gyartso took them and declared he could see the horns of a yāk. We at once took cover. The black object was some quarter of a mile only up the nullah, but was difficult to distinguish on account of the storm which blurred

* Short, thick overcoat supplied to British troops in cold climates. I first saw it when serving in the north of China in the winter of 1900-01.

everything. I took my rifle, told Siring and Gyartso to stay where they were, and proceeded up the nullah, keeping a little way up the slope of the hill so as to come upon the yāk, if the yāk it was, a little from above him. The wind was in my face, and so right if it would only hold. My chief difficulty was to walk quietly on the steep hill side of shale and loose stones. Another difficulty was not to get so out of breath as to be unfit for shooting. I had to stop every few paces to gain my breath. At this part of the nullah the elevation was probably about 19,000. Fortunately, the storm now lifted for a time, and the atmosphere became clearer. It was slow work, but at last I caught sight of something dark over a low rise I was ascending, and then actually made out a pair of horns. The yāk undoubtedly—perhaps the couple! Carefully I dragged myself over the rise, and then saw the two yāk lying down beyond it with their heads turned my way, but looking down the bottom of the nullah and not up towards me. They were only about fifty yards away. I got into a sort of sitting position, and aimed behind the shoulder of the nearer. How hard the “pull off” seemed—would it never go off? Bang! and up jumped both the yāks and made away up the nullah. I used my .405 Winchester magazine rifle as a single loader. I distrusted magazines, having often found cartridges jam when working from them. By the time I had got another cartridge in the yāks were nearly 150 yards away. My second shot hit the one first fired at again, and brought him to a walk; my third, at about 200 yards, hit the other in the stern. He staggered to the shot. My fourth or fifth hit him in the flank as he turned and stood looking back at his companion. I heard the cracking thuds of the bullets on the yāks. Both now stopped at from 200 to 250 yards, evidently badly hit. I fired a few more shots before moving on, and saw I had effectually cried a halt to them. I then went on along the side of the hill, as previously, to keep a little above them, and on arriving within sixty yards of the nearer, fired for his shoulder, he being broadside on. On receiving the shot he swung quickly round, faced me, and made a few steps in a threatening way with a toss of the head towards me. He would certainly have charged if I had been much closer to him or on the same level. I gave him several more shots, aiming for the chest cavity; the bull's head dropped lower and lower, and he sank to the ground. I then passed on to the other, which was half facing me, and from about sixty yards gave him a bullet on the point of the left shoulder; he swung round away from me and sank down. I went up and gave him a finisher as he struggled to rise. So here I had my two bull yāks dead.

Siring and Gyartso came up shortly afterwards and there was handshaking and congratulations. Siring, who had been at the death of several wild yāk, said they were both large and old bulls. That they were old was shown by their worn teeth. There was not much to choose in size between them—a fine pair. The measurements have been given in the early part of this chapter.

It was getting late when I killed the yāks, so deferring the measuring, etc., till the morrow, we cut off their tails and made for the place appointed for our new camp, where we arrived a little before nightfall. Soon afterwards our caravan hove in sight through the gathering dusk and the sleet, which still continued. I received the congratulations of my followers on my success. Camp was pitched a little after dark. I issued a special allowance of tea to the men and ordered the two remaining sheep to be killed for them. As soon as I could—having cleaned my rifle—I got into bed and had a cup of hot cocoa, followed by some fried slices of plum pudding—one of several made and packed up with my stores by my wife. Did I ever enjoy plum-pudding more?



HIMALAYAN IBEX.

CHAPTER XVIII.

HIMALAYAN IBEX.

Kashmiri - - - Kail.

Lahouli - - - Tangrol.

THIS fine goat inhabits the interior mountains of the Western Himalayas, extending northwards into Lādāk and Bāltistān. The River Sutlej is said to form the eastern and southern boundary of its range.

The male ibex is stoutly made and stands about 10 hands, with coarse hair of a dark greyish brown colour and a flowing black beard. A full-grown head has an imposing appearance. The horns curve backwards with ridges or knots up the front. Large horns average 40in. measured along the front curve, and 10in. in circumference at the base; but some have been obtained over 50in. in length and fully 12in. in girth.

The illustration given is from a photograph of a head I shot in Lahoul—41½in. long and 11¼in. round the base. In that province ibex horns are said to run shorter than in other parts of the Himalayas. The best heads are obtained in Gilgit and Bāltistān, where every year some of 45in. and over are shot.

Females are smaller than males, and have horns about a foot long.

In the winter the ibex are put to sore straits, and manage to exist in sheltered parts of the mountain sides where the snow is the least heavy. As the coming of spring melts the snow, their range is extended, and they are able to get at the new grass then springing up at altitudes above the forest line. Ibex are never found in forest. Most of the nullahs they affect are altogether bare of trees, such as those of Lahoul, Zaskar, Lādāk, and Bāltistān, and the height at which they are generally found is from 12,000 to 16,000 feet, according to the time of year.

As the summer advances and the snow lessens, their feeding grounds are further extended, until in the autumn they are widely scattered over the high mountains.

The best season for shooting is therefore in the spring and early summer, while their range is still restricted by the snow.

The males and females go together from autumn through the winter, but as the spring and the time for the birth of the young approaches, they usually separate, and remain so during the summer; the bigger males being found as high as the snow allows, in small herds or parties of six to twelve, and the smaller males and the females together, lower down, in larger herds of twenty to fifty. I say *usually* separate, because I have seen large males and females together in herds in the month of May.

During the middle of the day ibex (especially separate parties of old males) remain high up amongst rocks above vegetation, and only descend in the late afternoon to feed on the grassy parts of the hill; returning again to the rocks in the following forenoon.

Ibex shooting is the finest of mountain sports, carried on amidst the grandest scenery in the world.

In stalking ibex or any hill game you should try to keep above them, since they look much more for danger below than above.

One has many a hard, fruitless climb after ibex, but the good days come with perseverance. Many a man has given up Himalayan shooting after a taste of it, saying he does not care to "make a toil of a pleasure." Most big game shooting is a toil in some way, and only the man imbued with the love of it will persevere in it.

Before daybreak one May morning in the Bootna Valley in Eastern Kashmir, I was climbing up a steep gully in the hope of getting above any ibex there might be, by the time it became light, but had not started early enough, for soon after sunrise I saw some about 500 yards above me on rocky ground, with nothing between myself and the ibex behind which to take cover. So immediately on catching sight of them we lay quite still for about a quarter of an hour, when they disappeared behind the rocks for a short time, which opportunity we took to make to our left for cover. But before we could gain any the ibex showed again, and down we dropped, keeping quite still till they gave us another chance. We slowly withdrew in this manner until we reached the shelter of some big rocks, when we sat down in a good place whence we could watch them. The wind was blowing up the hill, but rather from our right, and so would probably

not carry our scent to the ibex, and they apparently had not seen us. However, there was a very long stalk before us. The only way we could get near them was by turning to our left into a nullah that ran down from the higher part of the hill, and then going up it to come out somewhere on the top of the hill nearer the ibex, which were slowly moving up. We thought when we arrived at the top we should at all events see them again and make further arrangements. So we turned into the nullah and worked our way up it. After a good hour and a half's climb over very steep and difficult ground, we judged we had ascended as far as was necessary, and bore to our right up the side of the nullah. On getting near the rocky ridge I sat down while the shikāri (a local villager) crawled up to reconnoitre. We little knew how close the ibex were. They must have slanted to their left as they ascended, for when the shikāri looked over the ridge he saw them all quite close. In answer to his hurried beckoning I climbed up as quickly as possible, but when I looked over they were all streaming away as hard as they could go, 100 to 200 yards off. They had seen the man when he first looked over. I fired several shots at a fine looking ibex—one among several big heads bringing up the rear, but without effect.

The mistake I made here was in not accompanying the shikāri when he went up to look over the ridge. I often found my eyes were not quick at seeing ibex amongst the grey rocks that so assimilated with their colour, but if from that reason I did not like to put my head up first, I should at any rate have been close to the man to take instant advantage of anything he could point out.

The wind may play you false and spoil the work of a long day. On one occasion near the Umāsi La Pass at the head of the Bootna Valley, I sighted a herd of ibex with some good heads in it, soon after daybreak, and kept them in view for several hours without being able to get within shot of the big ones. At last I marked them down high up among some rocks where they settled for their mid-day rest, and below which were some grassy slopes. We rested, too, under the shelter of some rocks, waiting for the time when they would come down to feed. About two o'clock I noticed two ibex descending. They moved slowly, feeding—a small male and a female. These two were the only ones that showed for a long time. About 4 p.m. we saw several others come feeding down the hill. We then left the place where we had been the last five or six hours, and managed to

creep some 200 yards closer to the ibex, getting behind a rock and watching for the big males to appear. This at length they did, four or five of them with good heads. They came walking, running, and feeding down the hill, rather in our direction, and I thought I should soon obtain my shot, when the wind changed, the ibex caught the taint, and were soon clambering up far out of shot. It was rather hard luck after all our patience.

Two days afterwards I crossed the Umāsi La Pass (17,369 feet) and camped in the nullah leading down into Zaskar. It was the end of May, and the pass was covered with snow for several miles. The glare of the sun on the snow was very blinding. In fact, I have found myself practically blind for a little time after crossing a snowy pass. Shaded glare glasses should always be worn, not only by yourself but likewise by your followers in these circumstances. A green or blue veil will also answer the purpose. But in this my first trip into "the hills" I was inexperienced, and had brought nothing of the kind with me.

In the afternoon, while reading in my tent, the shikāri suddenly came to the door and said there were ibex in sight. I jumped up, took the glasses, and sure enough made out a couple of males not high up the hill to the right in the direction of the pass. I was off with the shikāri before another two minutes, and wading through the river we began our stalk. The wind was blowing from the pass, as it had been all day, so we were all right in that respect. The ground was undulating, ridges or spurs coming down the hill to the river, covered with big loose stones and rocks. We proceeded carefully over each rise, when, just as we were crawling up one near the top, the shikāri cowered down, seized my arm, his own shaking with excitement, and half dragged, half signed me forward. On raising my head slowly I saw the horns of an ibex just showing over a boulder not more than thirty yards away. I hardly knew what to do, but began crawling on a little further, when again the man clutched hold of me, pointing to the left, and there I saw through a rocky crevice the head of the other ibex looking full at me, only twenty yards off. I was raising my rifle to shoot at his head—the only part visible—when he disappeared. I dashed over the rise of ground at once, and saw the two fine looking ibex clattering down in the hollow below, seventy or eighty yards away. I fired at the rear one and rolled him over with a shot in the back. Pulling the right trigger again in my hurry, I only found out my mistake in time to get a long shot at the other, which I missed.

My red-letter day with ibex was on June 24th, 1899. Three years before, I had a red-letter day with bison and buffalo on the same date. My wife and I crossed the Rotang Pass (13,326 feet) from Kulu into Lahoul on the 17th, and put up in the Koksir rest-house, a primitive erection in the Chandra—Bāgha Valley. Lahoul is a wild, desolate country, bare of trees. The view into it from the top of the Rotang Pass is striking. The forest-covered hills and green slopes of the beautiful Kulu Valley have just been left, and looking north from the pass the eye meets only an array of barren, savage mountains—a scene of rock and snow.

On the 19th we moved three or four miles up the Sonapāni Nullah (which runs down from the great range to the north) and camped not far from the foot of its glacier. There was snow lying about in patches round camp, and a little below us was a small lake some 200 yards long, on which were a couple of Brāhmīny ducks. The stream run down the nullah in several channels, and the water of some of the branch rivulets flowed clear and sparkling over golden coloured pebbles and sand, giving the name by which the nullah is known—Sonapāni meaning golden water. The streams here were rapid, but not torrents. A short way below camp the nullah dipped steeply and the streams combined into a foaming, roaring torrent.

It was a cloudy afternoon, and a thunderstorm that broke towards the evening was threatening. The clouds hung black and heavy, enveloping the snow-covered, rocky mountains closing the head of the nullah, and lowering over the gloomy glacier of dirty looking snow and ice. As we looked up it we were reminded of pictures in Dante's *Inferno*.

On the 20th, a local shikāri named Dobi, whom I had engaged, prospected up the nullah, and returned with the good news that he had seen two big ibex and some smaller ones on the hills to the west of the glacier.

On the 21st I started at daybreak and went up the nullah. We had to ford the streams, or river it might be called from the width of the bed, from the right to the left bank, not far from camp. There were several channels to cross, each about knee deep. The water was freezing cold, so effecting the passage was a painful process. After doing so we continued our way up the nullah, getting on to the glacier, and about a mile up from camp we ascended the hills on the west side. We looked over the ground where Dobi had seen the ibex the previous day, and went high up the mountain without seeing

anything of them. There was much ibex sign to be seen, such as tracks, droppings, and hair caught in grass or scrub, showing that the ibex had been some days on this part of the hill. We found their tracks of the day before going up the nullah, however, and concluded they had changed their ground and gone higher up into one of the lateral nullahs, where we decided to look for them on the morrow. We reached camp a little before dark, having had to ford that unpleasantly cold river again.

Daybreak on the 22nd saw us for the third time wading through the ice-cold streams, and we examined the mountain sides up to the head of the nullah, going over the upper part of the glacier and negotiating some nasty crevasses. We could see nothing of the ibex, and considered they must have gone into the Koksir Nullah, the next one to the west. So I decided to return to the rest-house and go up that nullah with a few things sufficient for two or three days. This I did, and the afternoon of the 23rd found me bivouacked up the Koksir Nullah with Dobi and five men who had carried our things. My wife stayed in the rest-house.

I made an early start the next morning with the shikāri and two men, and worked up the bottom of the nullah, examining the hills on either side. About nine o'clock Dobi (using the glasses) made out some female ibex on a grassy ledge under rocks not very high up. Soon after he said they had all lain down. We had our breakfast, and I was thinking we should not see anything more, when about eleven o'clock Dobi sighted some big male ibex high up amongst the apparently topmost crags of the great ridge dividing our nullah from the next to the west. Dobi was sure they were the ones he had seen in the Sonapāni Nullah. I could not see them, but I made out the place he meant. It looked and turned out to be a terrible climb. A quarter of an hour after sighting them Dobi said they had lain down. At 11.30 we started for our climb. After three hours' continuous climbing—2.30—we arrived about level with the ground on which the ibex ought to be if they had not moved. We then turned to our right along the side of the hill towards them. The wind was favourable. Dobi went carefully ahead. He did excellently and "spotted" the ibex from behind some rocks, only 150 yards away. I could not see them as they were lying down and were much the colour of the rocks and ground. Dobi repeatedly adjured me not to raise my head too high or they would see me. I felt pretty sure I should not make them out till they moved. One shortly did so. He got up and then I saw him, about 150 yards off. This was at three

o'clock.* My rifle was a regulation Martini-Metford '303 cavalry carbine, a single loader with falling block breech action. I took my shot and dropped the ibex. "Sālām" said Dobi, turning to congratulate me. Then two or three more ibex appeared, and with my second shot I dropped another. Several more now came in view and ran about in a confused way—two coming towards us. They evidently did not exactly know where the firing came from. With my third shot I got a third ibex, and then I made several misses I think, but managed to drop a fourth. Another ibex now came racing along the side of the hill below us. I fired at him and missed. He disappeared from view but shortly re-appeared a good 200 yards off, still going. Then he stopped, and, taking a quick shot, I got him too. So I had five ibex down. Dobi said there were nine ibex altogether—all males. If so, four escaped. I had fired nine shots. Just then one of the ibex that had been shot came staggering slowly down the slope about 120 yards from us. I finished him with another bullet (the tenth cartridge), and he rolled a long way down the hill. We then proceeded to gather the slain, which took some time, as they had fallen and rolled down the steep slopes in several directions. I had no measuring tape with me. We cut off the heads and rolled the bodies down the hill. It was a sight to see them bounding with a great clatter down the steep slopes and precipices. I judged the two biggest heads to be 44in. and 40in., but when I was able to lay the tape on them found them to be 41½in. and 39½in., with girths of 11¼in. and 10½in. respectively. Dobi said they were the two largest heads ever shot in Lahoul, and he ought to know, for he was the best known shikāri of that country, and had accompanied sportsmen in it for the past twenty years. His statement agreed with Colonel Tyacke's "Sportsman's Manual for Kulu, Lahoul, and Spiti," which recorded the best heads obtained in Lahoul for many years.

We had a difficult, and often dangerous, descent to the valley, the men carrying the big heads—the shikāri and myself the rest of the things. We commenced it at four o'clock, and Dobi and I reached the bottom of the nullah about 6.30, and arrived at our bivouac at seven. A little before eight the men came in with the two big heads. The others were brought to the rest-house the next day.

I sent a note off to my wife to tell her of my luck, and in the morning she met me on the way to the rest-house, and I fought my

* I always wore a wrist watch which enabled me to see the time at any moment, and I had just before glanced at it.

battle over again. This was my wife's first hill trip with me, and she wrote the following verses thereon :—

A SONG OF A TWO MONTHS' LEAVE.

I sing a song of a two months' leave
A Major may take, and his pay receive ;
I sing a song of a man and his wife
From the heat of Umballa escaping for life—
All on the road to Kulu.

Yākdāns and kiltas* a score had they,
Mules to carry them, coolies to pay,
And seven servants of various kind,
And a dog that wouldn't be left behind—
All on the road to Kulu.

The start was made on a Saturday night,
The moon was young and its baby light
Shone on a wonderful, beautiful sight,
Man, wife, dog, servants, taking their flight—
All on the road to Kulu.

Clean and fresh as a dhobi† could do
They entered the train—this honeymoon two,
But a wind sprang up, and a dust storm blew,
At Amritsar they turned out a pitiful crew—
All on the road to Kulu.

Oh ! stuffy and breathless the small hotel,
Dirty of aspect and doubtful of smell,
With a lady that sat at the table and yarned,
They wished she had stockings she ought to have darned—
All on the road to Kulu.

Then up and away with their loins girt,
Away from Amritsar, and heat and dirt,
Pathānkot sees them at one a.m.—
A multitudinous worn out them—
All on the road to Kulu.

Then away again at six o' the clock,
Of tongas‡ two, of ekkas§ a flock,
The horses jibbed, the horses reared,
They pranced and galloped as they careered—
All on the road to Kulu.

* Leather-covered trunks and baskets for pack animals and " coolies." † Washerman.

‡ Travelling chaises.

§ Two-wheeled country pony-carts.

At last they reached a sweet green hill,
Where air at eve and dawn was chill,
And they wanted a blanket for warmth at night,
And heads grew cool and heels grew light—
All on the road to Kulu.

Dust and stress were left behind,
There was ease for body and rest for mind,
Fir covered hills were green to the sky,
And mountain streams went rippling by—
All on the road to Kulu.

Up in the morning at break of day,
On to their ponies, off and away!
Was there ever a couple so blithely gay,
As this man and his wife on a holiday—
All on the road to Kulu.

Mutton and murgghi* their only food,
The little etceteras we don't include,
The little etceteras in tin and glass,
They went for nothing, so let them pass—
All on the road to Kulu.

Murghi and mutton I guess you'd say
Are capital food when you've marched all day
Up hill and down dale and over the stream
Through a country fair as a beautiful dream—
All on the road to Kulu.

Soup, fish, a joint, an entrée or two!!
Ugh! they are barbarous! give me a stew
Of mutton or murgli, onions, aloo†—
Your appetite good and your luxuries few—
All on the road to Kulu.

Up when the grey dawn is filling the skies,
And the servants and muleteers are rubbing their eyes,
Away ere the sun down the mountain can creep,
While the soft mist still lingers on cedar-clad steep—
All on the road to Kulu.

Reading the story of Time in the rocks,
The water-hewn valleys, the ice-carried blocks,
The gleam of the marble, pure white as the snow,
That tells of some ancient and igneous thro—
All on the road to Kulu.

* Fowl.

† Potatoes.

BIG GAME SHOOTING IN

The sweet rippling sound of the clear mountain streams
That brighten our march or accompany our dreams,
The scent of the pine wood, the sight of the snow.
These are but few of the joys that we know—
All on the road to Kulu.

Here in the hush of the cedar-clad heights,
With their sunshine and shadow and glorious nights,
Here we have found in our sweet daily life,
That there never were pals like a husband and wife—
All on the road to Kulu.

Manāli Nullah,
May 29th, 1899.





KASHMIR STAG.

CHAPTER XIX.

DEER.

THE Kashmir deer (*hāngal*—*bārāsingha*), the swamp deer (*bārāsingha*), the *sāmbar* (called so both in English and *Hindustāni*), and the spotted deer (*cheetal*), are the principal species of the deer family in India.

The illustrations given (scale about one tenth) show the difference in the heads. The Kashmir stag is from a photograph of one I shot in the upper part of the *Shāhābād* Nullah, that runs into the vale south of *Islāmābād*. I came upon him between three and four on an October afternoon, lying down amongst some scattered trees on a ridge—perhaps 11,000 feet high. I could not get closer than 220 yards, and secured him with a shot from a '256 Mannlicher, whose telescopic sight aided me considerably, the stag not being very distinct in the shade of a tree. The sweep of the antlers is very symmetrical, with a fine span. The measurements were—main beam, 39in.; girth at thinnest part of beam, $5\frac{7}{8}$ in.; girth at base (the burr), $9\frac{3}{4}$ in.; outside span, $40\frac{1}{2}$ in. Eleven points—five on the right and six on the left antler.

The other heads shown are merely typical outline representations, as my swamp and spotted deer heads are not now in my possession, and I have never obtained a good *sāmbar*.

The record for the Kashmir stag is I believe 49in. along the main beam, and is amongst other fine specimens in the *Māhārāja* of Kashmir's palace.

Forsyth's best swamp deer (shot in the Central Provinces) was $33\frac{1}{2}$ in., and the outside span 36in., with twelve points. He considered there were a few larger to be found.

Sāmbar heads run from 35in. to 40in. Forsyth's best was 41in.; circumference at the burr, 10in.; round the thinnest part of the beam, $8\frac{1}{2}$ in. He states he never saw a larger head altogether than this in Central India.

Spotted deer heads run from 25in. to 30in. The longest I ever shot was 34½in., but the horns were covered with velvet, which fact I did not notice when I shot him, as he came out of a beat, down a little dry watercourse I commanded (through light intervening jungle) from a ladder against a tree. This was in the middle of February. He had therefore probably shed his old antlers in October.

Regarding the shedding of antlers, Forsyth wrote :—" I have taken much pains to assure myself of a fact, of which I am now perfectly convinced, namely, that, neither in the case of the sāmbar nor the spotted deer (both belonging to the Asiatic group of *Rusinæ*, as distinguished from the *Cervidæ* or true stags) are the antlers regularly shed every year in these Central Indian forests, as is the case with the *Cervidæ* in cold climates. No native shikāri, who is engaged all his life in the pursuit of these animals, will allow such to be the case ; and all sportsmen out at that season must have seen stags with full-grown horns during the hot weather and rains, when they are supposed to have shed them. Hornless stags are seen at that season, but the great majority have perfect heads. I have also known certain stags for successive years always about the same locality, and which I have repeatedly stalked at intervals, during this time along with natives who constantly saw them, so that I could not be mistaken as to the individual ; and all the time they never once dropped their horns."

Forsyth was of opinion that swamp deer probably shed their horns more regularly than sāmbar or cheetal. He states their rutting season to be in September and October, and relates having shot stags in January, but gives no details of the heads, which were presumably shootable.

Colonel Pollok wrote concerning swamp deer :—" They lose their horns in September and October, and the new are not perfect till about the middle of June, though I have got good heads towards the end of of May now and then." This seems a longer time than usual for the growth of new antlers. Kinloch mentions the case of a swamp deer being shot in May whose horns "were not clear of the velvet." Mr. Eardley-Wilmot says that the stags carry no antlers in the hot weather. I have, however, seen stags with perfect antlers in April and May.

Amongst this conflicting evidence the statements of Forsyth and Pollok are especially in opposition. The former authority places the rutting season of swamp deer in September and October, when the horns would be perfect, and the latter gives these months as the period during which the horns are shed.



FIG. 23.

Sāmbar (particularly old stags) doubtless occasionally retain the same horns for two or even three seasons, but when they shed them, they certainly do so in the spring, as their rutting season is well known to be in October and November, and they must have their antlers ready by then for battle and adornment. I have never seen a sāmbar with antlers in the hot weather

With reference to cheetal, Kinloch wrote:—"A peculiarity about the spotted deer is, that it appears to have no regular season for shedding its horns, as is, I believe, the case with almost all other deer. I have shot stags with hard horns, others with horns in the velvet, and others again without any horns, in the same week; and this in different months." His view regarding this is, that they have no regular breeding season, and therefore are born in various months, and drop their horns according to their age. This may also be true of swamp deer.

In Scrope's "Days of Deer Stalking," an interesting case of a stag seen while shedding his horns, is related in the following words: "It is not very long since a hart fell under the close observance of a forester, whilst in the act of shedding his horns in a forest in Sutherland. Whilst he was browsing, one of his antlers was seen to incline leisurely to one side, and immediately to fall down to the ground; the stag tossed up his head, as if in surprise, and began to shake it pretty violently, when the remaining antler was discarded also, and fell some little distance from him. Relieved from this weight, he expressed his sense of buoyancy by bounding high from the ground, as if in sport, and then, tossing his bare head, dashed right away in a confused and rapid manner."

The Kashmir deer shed their antlers regularly in the spring, and renew them by the autumn. The shooting season for them commences, by the Kashmir game laws, on the September 15th, just previous to the rut. The stags "call" through October, and that is the best time to try for them, as in the heavily forested nullahs in which they are usually found, it is only, as a rule, by hearing the "call," and taking advantage of its guidance, that a stag can even be sighted, and a shot possibly obtained. They affect the upper parts of nullahs at heights of 8000 to 11,000 feet. The call may be described as a half bellow, half roar, ending (but not always) with a kind of squeal, and can be heard for about a mile across a valley.

They sometimes call very little during the day, and then their "soiling" pools should be looked for (where their tracks and the marks of their rolling in the mud will be found), and the vicinity

watched. I have never seen a good Kashmir stag at a pool in the daytime from the early morning to the late evening. In my experience they go to soil chiefly at night, but fresh traces form a guide as to the hill sides to be worked. My men were never able to follow their tracks for more than a few hundred yards, except one season, when an early snow fall covered the ground, and then the snow was always hard, and the crunching sound made in walking over it rendered it impossible to get a shot in the thick forest that prevailed in my nullah.

October is the finest month of the year in the Himalayas—cold, bright, and clear. The dry, bracing weather adds to the charm of seeking and shooting a noble stag in the beautiful Kashmir mountains. The stag stands 12 to 13 hands, running, therefore, larger in size than the Scotch deer, whom in all other respects he more nearly resembles than any other species of Indian deer. He has brow, bay, and tray antlers, and the “royal” points—the “crown”—on the top of the horns like the Scotch stag, but carries a finer head.

Scrope makes a singular mistake in writing that the Himalayan stag “has one short brow antler alone, never more; two or three points at the extremity of each beam.” He must have confused it with the swamp deer, the upper part of whose beam, however, branches into four or five, or even six points.

Technically, in England and Scotland, deer are called calves (male and female) before they are one year old. After one year the male is termed a “brocket,” and has knobs with small brow antlers on his head. At three years, a “spire,” with brow and uprights. At four, a “staggart,” with brow, bay, and uprights. At five, a stag, with brow, bay, tray, and uprights. At six, a warrantable stag, with brow, bay, tray, and two points on each upright—in fact, a ten-pointer. A stag “crowned” with three points on each upright (a twelve-pointer) is called “royal.”

It is probable that the age of the Kashmir stag is marked in the same way as that of the Scotch and English, and that the above terms can be equally applied to him.

The combats of stags during the rutting season are described as follows by Scrope, who witnessed several:—“The harts are heard roaring all over the forest, and are engaged in savage conflicts with each other, which sometimes terminate fatally. When a master hart has collected a number of hinds, another will endeavour to take them from him; they fight, till one of them, feeling himself worsted, will run in circles round the hinds, being unwilling to leave them; the

other pursues; and, when he touches the fugitive with the points of his horns, the animal, thus gored, either bounds suddenly on one side, and then turns and faces him, or will dash off to the right or the left, and at once give up the contest."

Remains of fighting stags have been found with the antlers inextricably locked together.

The period of gestation with most of the larger deer in all parts of the world is stated to be about eight months. If this is so, the greater number of fawns of these species that rut in the autumn are dropped during May and June.

The heaviest deer in India is the sāmbar, standing 13 to 14 hands. They are found in all the forested hill ranges of the peninsula, east and south of the River Sutlej, and in Burma.

The swamp deer stands 11 to 12 hands. They are found in the Central Provinces, Assam, and the Terai. In the Central Provinces they seem only to inhabit sāl forest, which forest grows in the valleys, not extending to any height up the hills. In the valley of the River Hālon, in the Meykul Range in the Central Provinces, I saw many swamp deer in the sāl forests along the river, but none on the hills bounding the valley, where the sāl (*Shorea robusta*) changed to teak and other trees, and the sāmbar took the place of the swamp deer.

The spotted deer, so called from its white spots on a rufous ground, stands 9 to 10 hands, and is found generally throughout India in forests bordering rivers and streams, though not west of the Sutlej.

All stags do a certain amount of injury to young trees and saplings by rubbing their horns against them to get rid of the velvet, thereby stripping off the bark, which may lead to the death of a sapling.

The tracks or "slots" of the fore feet of the different stags are as illustrated—about a quarter size. It will be observed the tracks of the Kashmir stag and the swamp deer are wider in proportion to their length than those of the sāmbar or spotted deer. A big Kashmir stag's slot is indeed as wide as it is long. The largest I ever saw, clearly cut in the muddy part of a path, was about five inches both ways. This must have been an enormous stag, but, though hunting assiduously for several days, I failed to find him. The feet of hinds are narrower and more pointed than those of stags.

I have only shot two swamp deer stags, and it happened in this wise. I was in the beautiful Hālon Valley, in the Mandla District of the Central Provinces. Sāl forest covered the valley. The water of the Hālon was so clear, that the pebbly sandy bottom, could be seen at a depth of three or four feet. It flowed through the most lovely

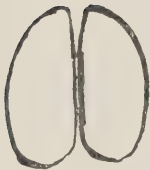
forest scenery imaginable. I was there in April and May, and the sāl trees were clothed in a foliage of the most vivid green. There were large glades and park-like open spaces with clumps of trees, as well as continuous forest, and the whole valley was of absolutely fairy ideal beauty. I came across no swamps, so the name of swamp deer has no relation to the habitat of the species in that part of the Central Provinces. Hinds were very numerous, and fed late in the day on the short, green grassy parts of the glades. More than once I thus



Kashmir Deer



Sāmbar



Swamp Deer



Spotted Deer

FIG. 24.

saw them out in the open at midday. In the early morning I used to see them on the banks of streams, or standing in the water. I once came on a fine-looking stag standing in the rushes on the further side of a large pool, seventy or eighty yards across, and—oh grief!—missed him with both barrels of a '500 black powder Express.

The time I got my stags was on an April morning, an hour or two after sunrise, when we saw some deer moving along near the edge of the forest on the other side of a large open stretch of ground. We

had all crouched on seeing the deer, and, leaving the men (aboriginal Bygas) lying down, I crawled to a mound some distance off, whence I hoped to obtain a long shot. On reaching it I found the deer too far, perhaps 300 yards away, slowly moving on and feeding, strung out in single file and small groups of two and three. There appeared to be at least twenty, with several antlers amongst them. When they had disappeared in the long grass and forest I called up the men, and we followed the herd. On entering the jungle we proceeded very cautiously, and in a little time again caught sight of the deer. I could see the backs of two or three as they stood in the bed of a nullah, no doubt drinking from the pools not yet dried up by the sun. We crept on through the long grass towards them, but lost sight of them for a time. So I went on with one of the Bygas and cast about for the direction their tracks had taken. While so doing the Byga suddenly saw the deer, bent low, and, beckoning me to follow in the same manner, ran on towards some rising ground. Arriving at this, he signed me to look over, and slowly raising myself I saw through the high grass all the deer standing in a muddy pool, from fifty to seventy yards off. This must have been between eight and nine o'clock. The grass interrupted my view considerably, and the deer were so closely grouped together in the water, that I could not make out or get a clear shot at the best antlers.

While trying to do this, the deer evidently became aware of danger, and began to move away to the water's edge, so I took my shot through the grass at a stag which I thought had fair antlers, and then stood up as they all rushed *en masse* out of the water at the report. It was a fine sight. A good stag was amongst the leaders, and I gave him my left well forward. Before I could put in another cartridge they had disappeared in the high grass and jungle which came down almost to the water's edge. The Byga shouted out that one was down, and we found the stag I had first fired at, lying dead about fifty yards from the pool. The head was a poor one though the animal was full-grown. Feeling the big stag was hit with the left barrel, I called up the rest of the men and we looked for blood, and tracked the herd some way by the beaten down grass. But we could find no blood, nor hold on to the tracks very far, so gave it up, though all the time the stag was probably lying dead close to the pool, as we afterwards discovered. Having cut off the head of the stag bagged, and covered the body with branches, we made for camp. The Bygas always took care to cut good leafy branches to protect the meat from the power of the sun, and to tie a rag or a portion of their clothing

to one of them to keep off jackals, crows, etc. Their clothing, by the by, was not much. The Bygas are the aboriginal race inhabiting the Meykul Hills. Forsyth thus describes them:—"They are very black, with an upright, slim, though exceedingly wiry frame, and showing less of the negretto type of feature than any other of these wild races. Destitute of all clothing but a small strip of cloth, or at most, when in full dress, with the addition of a coarse cotton sheet worn cross-wise over the chest, with long, tangled, coal-black hair, and furnished with bow and arrow and a keen little axe hitched over the shoulder, the Byga is the very model of a hill aborigine. He scorns all tillage but the dhya-clearing* on the mountain side, pitching his neat habitation of bamboo wicker-work, like an eagle's eyrie, on some hill top or ledge of rock, far above the valleys penetrated by pathways; and ekes out the fruits of the earth by an unwearying pursuit of game."

On the two following days I was trying for sāmbar on the hills, and the third day descended into the valley, striking across it to my new camp near the Hālon. On the way we passed the pool at which I had shot the stag, and noticed some crows in a tree fifty yards from it, and others flying up to the branches from the high grass underneath. Going to the place, we found the remains of the big stag, evidently just two or three days old. The head was a very good one, with eleven points. The main beam measured 32in.

The first spotted deer stag I ever saw I bagged. It was in the latter part of June at the very hottest time of the year, that is, before the breaking of a late rainy season. I was camped near a southern tributary of the River Jumna, which flowed through heavy forest. I found a good many tracks of spotted deer at one point, and lay in wait for them several evenings. While doing so I used to see hundreds of pea-fowl, with many gorgeous-tailed cocks, drinking at the water's edge. The first time I watched, some deer came when it was too dark to distinguish them. The next evening, however, they came running down to the river out of the jungle, across the open stretch of sand to drink, when there was still enough light to shoot by. They were rather too far from my hiding place, so I crept along under cover of the jungle to get nearer. While so doing the deer saw me, and began racing back. I could not get a clear shot at a stag and thought I had lost the opportunity, but as I ran towards them, the last one—a

* A space cleared in the forest by the axe, the timber set on fire when dry, and the ashes distributed over the ground. When the rains come the grain is sown in the ashes, and a fair crop results.

fine stag—instead of following the rest into the jungle, stopped just on the outside of it and looked at me. I could see his chest and branching antlers: another moment and he would be gone and the chance lost, so I dropped on one knee, rather breathless with running, hurriedly sighted his chest, and fired. He turned and disappeared. I did not know whether I had hit or missed, but ran to the place and found the stag lying dead twenty yards in the jungle. The main beam measured 3oin.

A few days afterwards a rather curious incident occurred—a stag being only stunned by a shot of mine. I was again lying in wait at this part of the river, and fired at a stag, distant about 120 yards. The hinds with him raced back to the jungle, but he stood still in a startled sort of manner as if intently listening. I fired again, when down dropped the stag. On running up I found one of his brow tines knocked off, and could see no wound anywhere. In a minute or so he began to recover, and it was all I could do to keep him down till a man ran up with a knife and cut his throat, though he got up during the operation and nearly knocked us over.



CHAPTER XX.

ANTELOPE.

ANTELOPE all over the world are usually found on open plains, and have generally to be openly approached with more or less success according to the amount of disturbance they have previously experienced. Where they have never or rarely been hunted they may be easily walked up to within close range. When they have been much shot at they will not allow a man within 600 yards of them, if they can see him. They seem to depend much more on sight than smell to protect themselves. I have never taken the wind into account in approaching antelope, but doubtless one should do so if attempting to stalk them under cover.

On open ground, where concealment is impossible, the best way to approach all kinds of antelope is to walk openly and steadily along in a direction that will take you past them within shot, but never to walk straight towards them. You should not look at them, except by a glance of the eye without turning the head, or only imperceptibly doing so, and any men following you should act in the same manner; the idea being to induce the antelope to suppose you only a party of travellers proceeding on their way. When they become uneasy, fire must be opened. A good plan is to walk with a led horse or camel behind you, and on arriving near enough, sit down for your shot; the man leading the animal going straight on and taking no apparent notice.

The commonest antelope in India is the beautiful one termed, in sportsman's parlance, "blackbuck" (*Antelope bezoartica*).* The buck is a deep glossy black, strongly contrasting with the abruptly demarcated snow-white of the belly. He stands about eight hands at the shoulder. The handsome horns are spiral and closely ringed,

* In Hindustani—hīran.

from 18in. to 24in. long in full grown bucks; but the latter length is rare. The record is, I believe, 28in. They are measured straight from base to tip. I have shot about a dozen between 24in. and 25in., but never one actually 25in., my longest being $24\frac{3}{4}$ in.

The illustration given is from a photograph of a $24\frac{1}{2}$ in. head with an exceptionally wide splay.

The Indian antelope is found in numbers varying from parties of half a dozen to great herds of—it is said—over a thousand.

As they live principally in inhabited and cultivated parts of India, they are accustomed to the sight of people and villages. I have seen antelope feeding within a quarter of a mile of a village, and frequently within 200 yards of natives working in the fields. But let the sportsman appear with his rifle, and they seem instinctively to be aware of his hostile intentions. At the same time they are often wonderfully tame. I once walked towards a buck that was lying down in perfectly open ground, and he did not rise till I had arrived within eighty yards of him, and even then he only stretched himself in a leisurely way, looked at me a moment or two, and moved slowly off. I have several times walked parallel with a herd at a distance of about 150 yards for some minutes, delaying to fire until a good buck amongst them would expose himself.

When they are wild there are many ruses that may be adopted to obtain a shot, such as lying in a bullock cart that is taken past the antelope, mingling with a herd of cattle driven within shot, disguising yourself as a villager, which is easily done by throwing a "chadar" (sheet of thin cotton cloth) over your head, concealing yourself, preferably down wind, and having the antelope sent in your direction by men circling round to the opposite side of them.

Blackbuck is generally the first kind of "big game" the young sportsman tries his hand at after arrival in India, when he may become smitten with "buck fever," and think nothing so important for the time as getting a good pair of horns.

My first big game was not blackbuck, but an Indian gazelle (*Gazella Bennettii*), commonly called "chink," an abbreviation of its native name chinkāra—a small, graceful species, standing about 2ft. 2in. in height, with horns closely ringed and slightly curved, measuring 9in. to 13in. along the front of the curve.

I was staying with a friend, H—, in the Opium Department at Etāwah, in the North-West Provinces, not far from the River Jumna, which there flows through a network of ravines in which chinkāra were fairly numerous. My host and I went out after them the



BLACKBUCK.

morning following my arrival. We worked amongst the ravines for some time, occasionally seeing chink but not being able to get a shot, until one—a buck—suddenly got up within twenty yards of me out of broken ground, and I knocked it over with a bullet through the back. Next day we tried for blackbuck, but without success, seeing some but not being able to obtain a shot. I remember that evening after dinner talking with my friend about antelope and gazelle shooting, and saying how much I would prefer to bag a blackbuck than a chink, and how I thought I would never tire of blackbuck shooting.

After two days with H——, I returned to Lucknow, where my regiment—the old fortieth—was stationed, with my chink head, the first trophy to adorn the walls of my bungalow, and whenever I could get the opportunity, used to ride out, starting before daybreak, to try for blackbuck on the open plains in the vicinity. I generally had to go nine or ten miles. One June morning I shot my first blackbuck—a great event—though the horns were only 15in. I sighted what seemed to me a good buck of a dark colour, lying down by himself about 600 yards off. I saw that a nullah not far from me would probably take me within shot. I got into the nullah and by its means made a successful stalk to within a hundred yards of the buck, which was still lying down. Raising myself carefully over the edge to get into position for shooting, I took my shot and had the enormous satisfaction of seeing my buck struggling on the ground. I ran up and was joined by the native—also in great glee—whom I had left near my pony. The “hālāl” was performed; then came the measuring and the examination of the prize. What moments of elation these were! Perhaps in all my subsequent shooting I was never more pleased and happy. It is the same, I think, with many. Their first blackbuck is a shikar memory standing out by itself.

Sometimes in these early morning excursions I came across other game than blackbuck. Once just after daybreak I saw some animal trotting slowly over the plain about 300 yards away. It was hardly light and I could not make out what it was. I ran after it and managed to get within 150 yards before it became aware of my presence, and then, making a lucky shot, I dropped it. Going up I found I had killed a fine dog wolf (*Canis pallipes*)*—the first I had ever seen in its wild state. He was no doubt returning home a little later than usual from a night's marauding.

* In Hindustani—bheria.

Another morning, on the edge of a piece of "dāk"* jungle, I came upon two bull nylghi (*Portax pictus*), killed one, and wounded the other, which after following up several miles I also bagged.

On another occasion I went up the River Goomtee some fifteen miles from Lucknow, slept under a tree, and the next morning bagged a big bull nylghao and two blackbuck. In the afternoon I returned to cantonments, and was asked by a brother officer what luck I had had. "Two buck and a bull nylghao" I replied. "What a hunter you are!" he said; and I felt I was.

"Nylghao" means "blue bull" in Hindustāni. Natives consider it a bovine, and consequently Hindus will not hunt or eat it. It is, however, an antelope, the largest of the family in India, standing 13 to 14 hands at the withers, which are high and pronounced. It has a long neck, with a tuft of dark hair at the throat, and a deerlike head with short thick horns curving slightly inwards towards the points, 6in. to 8in. in length. The hindquarters rather fall away. The tail is tufted like that of cattle, and reaches down to the hocks. The colour is a dark bluish grey, deepening to bluish black in old bulls. The cows are light brown, smaller than the bulls, and without horns.

The biggest I ever shot was during a trip of a few days up the River Goomtee, which stood a good 14 hands, with horns 6in. long. There were open stretches of long grass, patches of dāk jungle, and occasional ravines and broken ground along the river. I made several attempts to spear wounded and unwounded nylghi on a fast grey pony I then possessed, but—except once—without success; the nylghi always ultimately gaining the shelter of the unridable ravines. I found it easy to get up to within ten yards of them, but when I made a rush to spear, they easily increased their pace and kept out of reach.

The time I succeeded I had fired at a bull and broken a fore leg; it was therefore no test as between pony and nylghao. He went off at a good pace, however, on three legs; so I mounted my pony, and, taking a spear, gave chase. I overhauled the bull in half a mile, but the dāk jungle we had entered being rather thick, I could not range alongside, and could only follow in his path. I pushed my pony right on to him and speared in the loins. The spear broke, the head remaining imbedded in the nylghao. He turned and faced me, shaking his head threateningly, and then slowly made off again. I followed, circling round him and hitting at him with the leaden butt of

* *Butea frondosa*. A tree ten to twenty feet high, with broad, dark green leaves, and covered with orange-red flowers in April and May.

my broken spear. He lowered his head and made a sudden dash at me, which I escaped. A nylghao's horns are sharp and strong, and well adapted for offensive use. I did not want them either in my pony or myself, so circled at a more respectful distance, but holding the bull to the ground and avoiding several more rushes he made at me, till my men came up with my rifle, when I finished him.

I have tried riding blackbuck with a revolver, but found it barren of results, not being a good enough shot with that weapon while at a fast gallop. A blue bull on account of his size would offer a better shot under such conditions, but I never came across one when out with a revolver. My plan was to ride slowly towards a herd of antelope, ready for a quick start, and I found that doing so they would generally let me within a hundred yards. They would then become uneasy and begin to move off, when I would make a quick dash at them at my horse's best speed. This would take me almost right up to them before they could get into their stride, many of them making those high jumps they indulge in previous to settling down to run, and I would be able to single out one and fire the six barrels of my revolver at it at a distance of ten to fifteen yards. But though generally successful in riding up close like this I never hit one, or at least never hit well enough to bring it to bag, and the antelope would soon leave me behind.

I was again stationed at Lucknow after the return of my regiment, then the 2nd Bengal Cavalry, from the Tel-el-Kebir Campaign in 1882, and used to ride about the country for antelope, accompanied only by my orderly—a Sikh named Magar Singh. Thus unhampered by foot followers, we could ride a long way from cantonments, cover a good deal of ground, and get back easily during the day. One very cold frosty morning in January we came to a ferry on the Goomtee which I wanted to cross. The horses, however, would not enter the ferry boat, which was rather an awkward one to get into. After some trying without success, my orderly said he would swim the horses across. He stripped and we put the saddlery, etc., into the boat. I went over in it, and as I crossed, watched Magar Singh getting over with the horses. He mounted one—my own, a handsome, impetuous grey mare called *Impatience*, probably the best horse I ever possessed, and, leading the other by the snaffle rein, pressed the horses into the river. It was fifty yards wide, and for more than half that distance out of the horses' depth. On losing her footing, *Impatience* reared straight up, beating the air and the water with her forelegs, snorting, and arching her fine neck. Magar Singh sat her like a

statue, rider and horse looking grand, and forced her on, perfectly controlling her and the led horse, which was also plunging and disinclined for the water. But under his determined handling they both soon settled down to swim, and were brought safely over the river. The water was bitterly cold and my gallant orderly shivered for some time afterwards; but saddling and riding on quickly restored his circulation. I was cold enough without having been in the water.

The best blackbuck heads are I think obtained on the Bikanir border of the Ferozepore District. I there adopted the method of hunting the antelope on a camel, and dropping to the ground when I had been carried within shot. A herd being once well on the move, heads in a certain direction, and will not change that direction, unless it is directly barred to them.

Therefore by judging the line of a herd and racing up on a camel so as to arrive within shot of its flank before the herd has passed, several shots at bucks may be obtained as they gallop along, frequently strung out in single file.

I mounted the men accompanying me on riding camels, so that, having no followers on foot, I could work over a large extent of country during the day, and carry along any game I shot by tying it on the camels. However many antelope may be bagged the meat will never be wasted, being eagerly taken by the villagers.

Perhaps I can best describe this sport by the following extracts from my diary of a blackbuck-shooting trip on the Ferozepore-Bikanir border.

"26th January.—We left camp about ten o'clock. A few miles to the east we passed a canal bungalow. Beyond this were large open plains which we hunted over. My first shot at a buck at about 200 yards was a miss, after following a small herd a couple of miles. We then came upon some more, and, cutting in on their line, I dismounted from my camel and ran forward to shoot at the buck as they passed. This was the plan we followed to-day. It is a sporting way of shooting blackbuck. The whole lot generally follow their leaders, and do not swerve off unless you run in very close, but you must shoot them on the move. I opened fire on a good buck as he passed me, and, missing with the first shot (the bullet killing a doe), got the buck with the second at about 120 yards. A 23½ in. head. We found another lot and manœuvred in the same manner, watching the line they took and urging on the camel to a fast pace towards the head of their column. I then dismounted and ran forward to obtain a shot at a good

buck that was bringing up the rear. As the buck passed me I opened fire (using the magazine),* missing him with two shots but getting him with the third when he was 150 to 200 yards away. A 20½ in. head. We found a third lot, and after a good deal of manœuvring, pursuing the same tactics, I hit a fine buck with a running shot, breaking a leg. A long pursuit ensued, during which I noticed several other lots of antelope—probably over a hundred in all. Hassan said he could see about 2000! but they were too far off for me to make them out well, and I was too much engaged in the chase of the wounded buck to stop and look at the reported large numbers through my glasses. Not getting near the buck, who always kept a good distance between us, I dismounted and concealed myself in some bushes, while Hassan went round on the camel and managed to drive him past the bushes within fifty yards of me, when I dropped him. A 24½ in. head. Immediately afterwards we saw some more buck coming towards us. I ran forward and secured another good buck by a running shot at 120 yards. A 24 in. head. After this we made for camp, and on the way saw some chink. I hit a buck off the camel, breaking a leg. We followed him into some fields, and, seeing his horns showing above the crop, I fired at him with a ten-bore gun and No. 1 shot, at about forty yards, from off the camel. The buck ran seventy or eighty yards and fell. During the day we came across some houbāra—a bustard (*Houbara Macqueenii*), and I shot three of them. One, however, was pounced on by hawks and nearly eaten up by the time we got to it. We reached camp about 5.30 p.m.

"27th January.—We left camp at 9.30 a.m., and went south, crossing the Ferozepore District boundary into Bikanir territory, a few miles from camp. Wide, open, sandy plains, with a little cultivation on the Ferozepore border. We hunted the antelope in the same way as yesterday, manœuvring to cut in on their line, dismounting, and running forward to shoot at the bucks as they passed 100 to 200 yards off. This is pretty hard work for the camel, one often having to trot along parallel with a herd for a mile or two before getting a chance to cut in on their line, when a favourable point which it is judged most of the buck will pass has to be raced for. It was a windy day, the wind blowing up the sand. A bad day for shooting, and seemed to put the antelope a good deal on the move. I shot very badly, only getting one buck for twenty-two shots. Verily my face was blackened! That buck, however, was a good one, the right

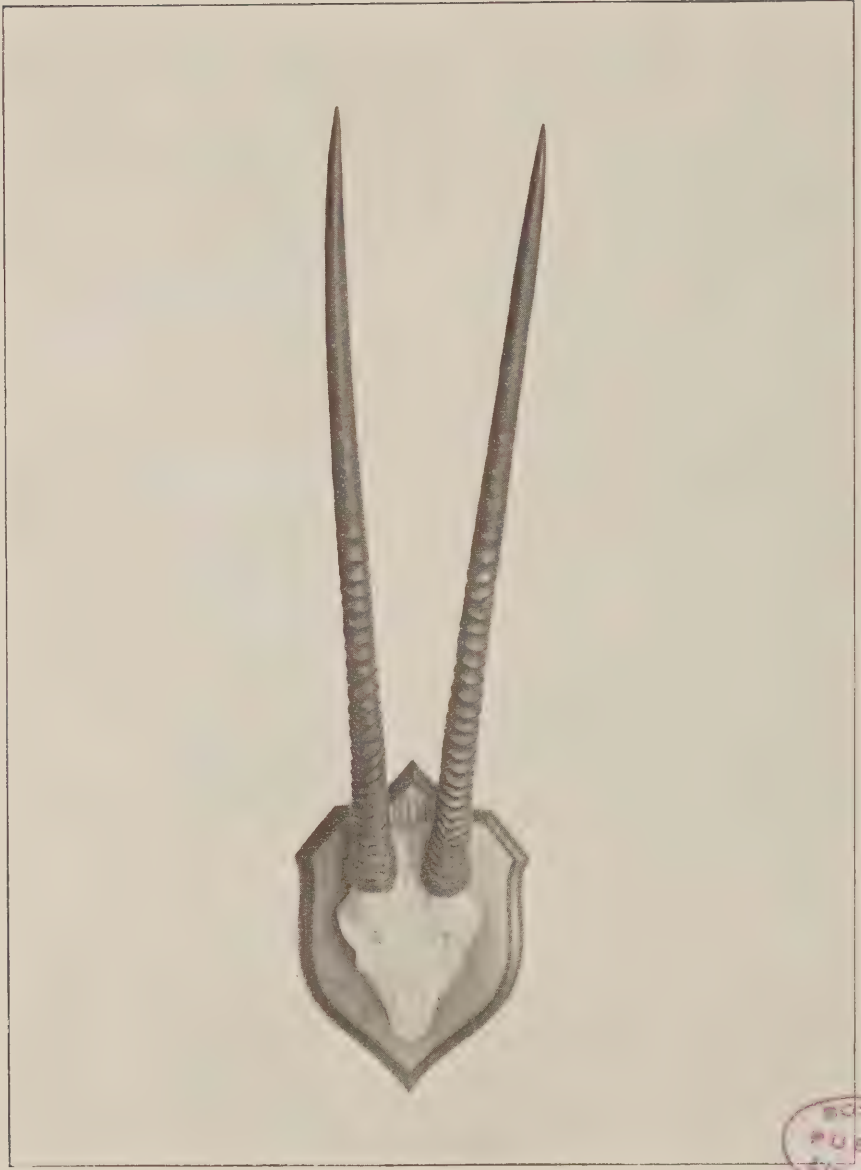
* I was shooting with a '303.

horn being 24in., the left 23½in.* Having expended all my cartridges, we made for camp, which we reached about 4 p.m. During the day, I shot four houbāra. No. 2 shot is, I think, the best to shoot them with.

"28th January.—We left camp at ten and worked eastwards past the canal bungalow. My first shot killed a fair buck (20in.) with a standing shot at 150 yards. This was a good beginning, but I did not keep it up. I shot very badly again to-day, firing twenty-nine shots for four buck bagged. All the shots except three were running ones. The second buck I got gave me a little trouble to bring to bag. I broke a leg with a running shot, but he went as fast as the camel could, keeping out of range, and always mixed up with a few others. Having followed him for an hour without being able to separate him, we at last set on a dog we had brought with us. The dog, however, as we expected would probably be the case if we could not separate the buck from the others, went after a sound one, and it is very possible the wounded one would have escaped if, near the canal bungalow, a chance dog had not pursued and caught him. The buck had about the best pair of horns I have yet secured—24½in. After this I made two good standing shots at buck, getting both within half an hour of each other. My other chances were cutting in on the line of moving herds and opening magazine fire on the bucks as they raced past, in which I was quite unsuccessful. During the day I shot a couple of houbāra. We returned to camp about five.

"29th January.—We left camp about 9.30, and went south, working over wide plains. I got alongside a lot of running antelope and knocked over two good bucks. Heads 22¾in. and 21in. Soon afterwards I ranged alongside another lot and dropped a buck which got up again and went off. We followed him up, and two or three more shots I fired having missed, we set on the dog. It was joined by two more chance dogs, and the three soon had the buck down—20¾in. head. I killed another buck later on with a standing shot. Paced the distance 170 yards. Horns 21in. I got a chink buck that I fired four shots at, killing it with the last at about 150 yards. Head 10¾in. I fired many shots at running buck without touching them. When a buck is shot Hassan nearly always gives his camel a portion of the intestines. The camel grumbles a good deal at the time the morsel is administered, but Hassan opens its jaws and rams the dainty down its throat. He is of

* I have noticed that when blackbuck horns are uneven in length, it is generally the right which is the longer.



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ORYX.

opinion that this keeps up the camel's strength and enables it to do the hard work of blackbuck shikar daily for several successive days. Back to camp about 5 p.m."

To change the scene to Somāliland.

That—as are most parts of Africa—is a great antelope country. Nearly every day, as you march along through open plain or bush, you get shots. Hundreds of antelope of several different kinds are often in sight at the same time. Scattered bush affords the most favourable chances of stalking the game. As in other countries, I have there found antelope sometimes wild, and at other times tame. The hartebeest, oryx, and Sœmmering's gazelle are the principal antelope on the Haud.

The hartebeest go about in numbers varying from small parties of three or four to herds of several hundred animals. The horns measure 14in. to 18in. on the curve. They are ringed, and the curve varies a good deal in different bulls, but is generally upwards at the base, then sharply outwards and upwards with the points bending backwards and inwards. The best head I obtained measured 16in. along the curve of each horn and 22in. straight between the tips. I considered it my best on account of the wide splay of the horns, which gave it a more striking appearance than several others of the same length that I shot. I wounded this bull, and then, riding him down, placed myself in front of him and killed him with a bullet in the forehead from a Webley .455 revolver. The head is not in my possession, I having given it, with many of my Somāli trophies, on my return from that country, to the Officers' Mess of my regiment, the 16th Cavalry.

The hartebeest stands 12 to 13 hands, with a glossy chesnut coat. The fore-quarters are heavily built, but the hind-quarters fall away. I found them most numerous in the Toyo Plain, and near the Abyssinian border in the neighbourhood of Harrhe Hill. It ought to be easy to get any number of hartebeest with decent shooting. They generally let you arrive within 200 yards by simply walking past them. No concealment is possible on the open plains on which they are found. When fire is opened they go off at a gallop, affording good running shots, as they usually go away slantingly across the firer's front, and not straight from him. I have known a herd after being fired at describe a half circle round me at a distance of 200 to 300 yards. The best sport with hartebeest would be to ride wounded ones with revolver, carbine, or spear.

The oryx is a handsome, stoutly built antelope of a grey colour with a donkey stripe, standing rather less in height than the

hartebeest. The horns are sharply pointed, with a very slight curve backwards, 28in. to 34in. in length. Cows' horns are often longer than the bulls', but thinner.

The illustration is from a photograph of a head in my possession, which measured—right horn, $31\frac{1}{2}$ in.; left, $30\frac{1}{4}$ in.; girth at base, $6\frac{1}{2}$ in. The best head I shot measured—right horn, $31\frac{3}{4}$ in.; left, $31\frac{1}{2}$ in.

Single bulls are often seen and small herds of bulls and cows together, numbering anything up to thirty or forty individuals. They are wilder than hartebeest when in herds, and then rarely allow an approach within 400 yards on open ground; but single bulls may sometimes be approached on such ground within 150 yards, and may even offer further shots within reasonable range after being missed.

The most remarkable instance of this kind that occurred to me was on the Maritime Plain fourteen or fifteen miles from Berbera, where, on quite open, level ground at the end of a march, when it was commencing to get dusk, I saw a single bull oryx feeding on the scanty tufts of grass that grew on the sandy plain. I got within 200 yards by running up behind him, and fired a shot which missed. The bull galloped off a short way and then fell into a walk. I ran in on him again, arriving this time within about 120 yards, and dropped the oryx with a bullet through the neck. He was a good bull with horns measuring—the right, 30in., and the left, $31\frac{1}{2}$ in.

Sømmering's gazelle (Somāli—aoul) are numerous over the greater part of the Haud. They are light brown in colour with a white rump, which makes them distinguishable at a great distance, and stand eight to nine hands. They go generally in herds of fifty to a hundred, but two or three bucks or a buck and a few does are sometimes seen together. The horns viewed in front are lyre-shaped. Swayne says the largest pair he measured were 17in. following the curve, and that the average is about 14in. The illustration is from a photograph of my best head, each horn of which measured 21in., and in girth $6\frac{1}{4}$ in. It is therefore an exceptionally large one. I saw the owner of it with two does while on the march one morning and, approaching under cover of bushes within 120 yards, killed the buck.

I had a very successful morning with antelope one July day in the central part of the Haud twenty to thirty miles from any Karias. The country was scattered bush, with occasional large anthills, very favourable for stalking game. We left camp at six, and in an hour saw some oryx. While stalking them they suddenly made off for no apparent reason. My-Somāli hunter thought they must have seen a



SÆMMERING'S GAZELLE.

1871
1872
1873

leopard. We soon sighted some more, and this time made a successful approach, under cover of trees and bushes, to within a hundred yards. Raising my head over a bush, I could see several oryx, but they did not offer clear shots on account of the grass and bush. I fired at one that I could see the plainest and missed. I then stood up, fired at another, and hit. At this they all galloped off—a lot of a dozen perhaps. As they went away I fired a third shot and hit another, and had two oryx down. I then ran on a little way and took a long shot at one at about 300 yards, and found soon after that I had got a third oryx with this shot. So I had made up well for my first miss, by getting three oryx down with three shots. I first went on and finished the last oryx. Returning to the second one hit I found it dashing about as well as it could at my hunter and syce. Oryx horns are formidable weapons, and Somālis have been killed by them through rashly going up to a wounded animal. This bull was crippled by a bullet through the hindquarters, and I finished him with another shot. I found they were all three bulls (bulls and cows are difficult to distinguish in a herd), measuring about 11.2 in height. The best head was the one that is illustrated. The other two were 28 $\frac{3}{4}$ in. and 28 $\frac{1}{2}$ in., and both 6 $\frac{1}{4}$ in. in girth. I sent the syce on the pony to camp to bring a camel to carry the heads and meat. The camel arrived soon after we had skinned and cut up the oryx, when we proceeded to look for more game, and came across two Scemmering's gazelle bucks lying down. I made a successful stalk, getting behind an anthill within a hundred yards, and fired at the one on the right. The buck turned over on his side with hardly a struggle, and the other did not get up, nor seem to notice his companion's situation. The wind was blowing from them to myself, and perhaps the report of the '303, which is not great, did not reach the antelope with sufficient noise to alarm him. I then fired at the remaining one and killed him also. Walking up I found the first fired at was hit in the hindquarter, the bullet passing out near the shoulder, and the second through the base of the neck. The heads were very good, being 18 $\frac{1}{2}$ in. and 17 $\frac{1}{2}$ in., and 5 $\frac{3}{4}$ in. and 6 in. in girth respectively. We returned to camp by 11.30 a.m.

CHAPTER XXI.

PIGSTICKING.

A FULL-GROWN Indian boar (Hindustāni—soor) stands from 30in. to 36in. at the withers, and varies in colour from a dark bluish grey to grizzly black, the shade becoming lighter with advancing years. He has a ridge of long bristles on the back of his neck and shoulders. The lower tushes (the trophies) are 6in. to 9in. long, and curve upwards, two thirds of the length being embedded in the jaw. The upper tushes are shorter and thicker than the lower, and also curve upwards. The two pairs, as the boar matures, work against each other in such a manner as to produce a sharp edge on both sides of the lower tushes. The sow has small tushes—too short, as a rule, to be effective weapons, and, it is said, her usual mode of attack is to bite instead of rip. There have been instances of boars doing this, springing up and biting through the sportsman's boot.

The biggest boar I ever measured was one I shot in non-pigsticking forest country, in the Central Provinces. He was 37in. high, from heel to withers, and 59in. long from snout to root of tail, both measurements being taken straight between uprights. The tushes were $7\frac{1}{2}$ in. The illustration is from a photograph of one of them, taken actual size. The next largest, that I also shot in the same kind of country, was 34in. high with $8\frac{1}{4}$ in. tushes. Boars are recorded 42in. high in some of the numbers of the old *Oriental Sporting Magazine*, but I do not remember seeing the method of measurement therein detailed. Anything over 36in. is very exceptional. The boars killed now-a-days in pigsticking countries in India are usually from 28in. to 33in. in height. One of the latter height is considered large



BOAR'S TUSK.

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The weights of some very large boars are given in "Reminiscences of Twenty Years' Pigsticking in Bengal," by "Raoul." The heaviest of these was 37½ in. high and weighed 213 lb.; the lightest, 35 in. and 158 lb.

Wild pig feed chiefly at night, and lie up in jungle, grass, or jow covered river-bed, and crops in the day. Their presence is indicated by tracks, havoc in crops (especially sugar cane), and ground ploughed up (by their snouts) for roots. A sign that I have not noticed is described by Sterndale as follows:—"Occasionally I have come across in the jungles a heap of branches and grass, and at first could not make out what it was, but the Gonds soon informed me that these heaps were the nests or lairs of the wild pigs, and they invariably turned them over to look for squeakers."

The general form of a good boar's fore foot track, if clearly imprinted, and showing the rudimentary toe marks to either side of the



FIG. 25.

heel (as will be the case in soft soil), is as illustrated—about a quarter size. The hind track is smaller and narrower in proportion to its length. The sow's track is like the latter.

A crusty old boar will often attack anything that annoys him. On one occasion at a grand field day near Delhi, in the presence of the Headquarters Staff, a boar charged a Horse Artillery gun moving at the gallop, and stopped its advance by throwing down the lead horses. Some staff officers, taking lances from their orderlies, killed him after a good fight.

The boar is a formidable fighter. A remarkable case is related in detail by "Raoul" of a big boar fighting off nine pigsticking men, engaging them at one time in quite open ground, overthrowing man and horse of any that dared to come to close quarters, and slowly and defiantly withdrawing till nightfall put a stop to the encounter. The next morning some villagers coming on the boar, he killed one of them,

cutting him up with his tushes, while the unfortunate man's companions fled for their lives. There were twenty-three wounds on the body, seven of which would have proved fatal. The boar got clear off, and was never brought to account so far as the author knew.

There are many good pigsticking songs, but the best, I think, is the following :—

The boar, the mighty boar's my theme,
 Whate'er the wise may say,
 My morning thought, my midnight dream,
 My hope throughout the day.
 Youth's daring spirit, manhood's fire,
 Firm hand and eagle eye
 Must he acquire who dare aspire
 To see the wild boar die.

Chorus—

Then pledge the boar, the mighty boar,
 Fill high the cup for me,
 Here's luck to all who fear no fall,
 And the next grey boar we see.

We envy not the rich their wealth,
 Nor kings their crown'd career,
 The saddle is our throne of health,
 Our sceptre is the spear.
 We rival, too, the warrior's pride,
 Deep stained with crimson gore,
 For our field of fame's the jungle side,
 And our foe the jungle boar.

Chorus—

Then pledge the boar, etc.

When age has weakened manhood's powers,
 And every nerve unbraced,
 These scenes of joy will still be ours,
 On memory's tablet traced.
 And with the friends whom death has spared,
 When youth's wild course is run,
 We'll tell of the dangers we have shared,
 And the tushes that we have won.

Chorus—

Then pledge the boar, etc.

There were some spirited verses in one of the old *Oriental Sporting Magazines*, which I cannot now get hold of, but which I remember began like this :—

From Lonasara's lofty hill a gallant boar now breaks,
Two hunters keen are after him, close on the line he takes,
One mounted on a chestnut steed, the other on a grey,
Dash down the slope with fiery haste and o'er the fields away.
For the jungle in the distance the wild boar steers his course,
And to catch him e'er he reach it will take a speedy horse;
But swift is that dark chestnut, and quite as swift the grey,
Nor hole nor stone delays them a moment in their way.
Well matched are those two horses for strength as well as speed,
The best blood of Arabia—the famous Nejdee breed;
Well matched, too, are the riders, and search ye far or near,
You'll not find the man to beat them in the saddle with the spear.

I forget the remainder, but it goes on with the same élan, describing the tussle for first spear, the fight, and the death of the boar.

Now for egotistical personal reminiscences.

As I kept no diary of my pigsticking, they are all from memory, but I have a fairly vivid recollection of the events.

I stuck my first pig during my first year in India—1874. I well remember what an excitement it was to me. Several of us went by train, railing our horses to Cawnpore, about forty miles from our station (Lucknow), to join a meet of the Cawnpore Tent Club. The month was May, and a horse belonging to a brother officer died during the meet from the great heat. We arrived in the afternoon and had to ride out a good way—I forget how many miles—to get to the camp whence we were going to pigstick the next morning. We arrived there rather late—some time after dark. We found a number of other pigstickers there, a good deal of bustle, many fires lighting up the clumps of trees amongst which the camp was pitched, and horses neighing at their pickets. We had a jolly dinner, turning in soon afterwards, as we were to be up early in the morning.

Before daybreak we were ready, swallowed some tea and poached eggs, mounted, and were off. We crossed an arm of the Ganges, and the rising sun began to light up the long string of horsemen, the spear points, the led horses, beaters, elephants, etc., that wound picturesquely along. Arriving at the commencement of the cover to be beaten, consisting of miles of rough grass and jow covered river-bed, we formed the line of beaters with elephants on the flanks and at intervals, the "spears" posted themselves in small parties of four or five at intervals also, and the array moved forward to the accompaniment of

the beaters' shouts and the drumming of the tom-toms. I was riding my one and only pony, a brown country-bred I called Tommy, about 13.2 high, a remarkably good pony for the price I paid for him—one hundred rupees, which would not be considered an out-of-the-way price nowadays! He was a regular subaltern's tat, would go in harness, jump, take his part in gymkhanas, do almost anything in fact that he was required to, was never sick or sorry for an hour while I had him, and was this day to show himself keen and staunch at pig. I entered him without any special training for a chase over the Lucknow pony course at a race meeting our Garrison Class gave to the station in the ensuing cold weather, and he brought me in third with only one fall—at the last fence, he being then a bit done.

We had many runs in the early part of the morning, most of them without result in the rough ground and long grass. Falls were numerous. I got a nice pigsticking "purler." Going hard after a pig close in front of me through grass higher than my head, Tommy—pulling and eager as possible—seemed to disappear from under me and I do not know what exactly happened in the next few seconds, except that I saw stars as I came in violent contact with the ground, and caught a glimpse of Tommy on his back with all four legs up in the air. Recovering from the shock I got up, secured my steed as he was moving slowly off, looking himself rather dazed by the fall, and then searched for my spear, which I found some yards away from where I had met mother earth. After that Tommy seemed to go with less impetuosity and more in hand. Perhaps he was learning wisdom.

Up till now I had caught but fleeting glimpses of pig in the grass, but in time came in for a good run with my party after an average sized boar in ground less grass-covered, when I got a good view of the game. He had "jinked" about and been speared several times when I found him a few yards in front of me. Some one close to my right rear called out "go at him," and go at him I did, and speared him in the back. "Well done" said the same voice. The first time of blooding my spear and the first wild pig I had ever clearly seen. After some further hustling and fighting, during which I got my spear in again, the boar was killed. The parties, beaters, elephants, etc., collected, and we had some long iced drinks, after which we rode back to camp, getting in by ten o'clock as far as I remember, then tubbing, changing, and sitting down to a late breakfast or early tiffin, whichever it might be called, between eleven and twelve, with hearty appetites in spite of the heat and a great thirst. I wonder what the present day advocates of abstaining from drinking at meals would do under such

circumstances! The events of the morning were well discussed, and after smokes everyone retired for a siesta, and to be ready to start for the afternoon pigsticking about four o'clock. We got several runs in the evening. One boar gave us some trouble, jinking about in the grass and being lost and found again several times till some one put in a good spear, and, the shaft breaking, left half of it in the pig. Then another man got in a good spear and left it standing in the pig. After this, in spite of the long grass, nullahs, and difficult ground in which we were riding him, the boar could not get out of sight or hide, the spear betraying his whereabouts like a sign post, and he was soon killed, fighting bravely with the spears swaying about in him as he charged first one and then another of his enemies.

Then came long drinks, pigsticking being thirsty work in May; the ride to camp, cantering along over the fields in the comparative cool of the evening; the tub and getting into dinner clothes; the jovial company at dinner—everyone in the best of spirits.

Four or five fair boar were killed that day, but there were a considerable number of "spears" out—over twenty I think.

Next morning my brother officers and myself were obliged to leave for Lucknow, but the pigsticking went on for another morning for those who could stay.

After this I took every opportunity of going out, but as I had only one pony and no money to spare, I could not do it often. Cawnpore was rather beyond my reach then, so I went out several times with parties in the vicinity of Lucknow, once or twice getting a horse lent me, which took some of the work off Tommy. We never got much sport, however, near Lucknow, and we left that station for Dum Dum, near Calcutta, in the autumn of 1875 without my having gained a "first spear," and being thus entitled to the tushes, which I was longing for.

I got no more pigsticking till the commencement of the hunting season in February, 1883, when I was at Lucknow with the 2nd Bengal Cavalry. I used to go sometimes to Cawnpore and hunt with the Tent Club there. C——, of the Elgin Mills, was then honorary secretary of the Tent Club—a first-rate man. I had two good horses for pigsticking, one Impatience, a grey, country-bred mare by an Arab Government sire (mentioned in the preceding chapter), and the other Fretful, a bay Belooch mare. The two were my chargers in Egypt. I also bought another horse about this time (out of a dealer's stable in Allahabad), like Impatience, a grey, country-bred mare by an Arab Government sire. I called her Bluebell, and entered her to pigsticking. We did not have much sport the few times I went out

with the Cawnpore Tent Club in February and March. At the end of the latter month, or perhaps it was the beginning of April, the Ganges Cup Meeting was held.

This was a great meeting. A special piece of cover somewhat less than a mile in length along the Ganges was reserved throughout the season for this, and a large camp pitched. The tents (furnished) formed a street, at the head of which was the mess tent, capable of dining sixty to seventy persons. C——, the honorary secretary, managed everything to perfection. Comfort and even luxury was the order of the day. A separate camp was pitched for ladies. Sportsmen came to this meeting from all parts of India, and it was in every way a noteworthy event.

I entered Impatience and Fretful for it.

The Rāna of Dholepur, a young man of about twenty I should think, was one of the competitors, with several of his household or staff. He was a very light weight and beautifully mounted on Arabs—one in particular, Red Prince, a fine chestnut Arab.

Lord William Beresford was also riding in this meeting, but was put out by a fall, breaking his collar bone.

The competitors assembled at camp, as was customary, the evening before the first day of the running. About fifty of us sat down to dinner, at which champagne and high spirits flowed. After dinner the "parties" were drawn and lotteries held. The parties generally numbered four spears.

The next morning we started after an early small breakfast (*chota hāziri*) to our different posts at the cover side. Screens of straw, matting, or hurdles, had been arranged to hide the parties from the view of pigs breaking, and at these screens cigarettes, cheroots, pegs, and biscuits, were thoughtfully provided to support nature at all stages of the proceedings! I rode Impatience in my first heat. After an hour or two of waiting, during which other parties were running off their ties, our turn came. Some pig broke a few hundred yards away out of the grass cover, taking across the more or less open fields with strips of grass and trees dividing them. After giving time to the pig to get clear, we started under direction of our umpire, who soon put us on to a fair boar and gave us the word to "ride." Then we went, "hammer and tongs." One of our party came to grief in a melon-bed, a treacherous kind of field that brought down many a horse at those meetings, but the falling in them is soft. I got on to the pig, but he jinked and let in another man, who rode him close along a ridge of grass, dividing fields, and secured the first spear.

Later in the day I rode Fretful with the other party I was drawn with ; but I was put out of it by the carelessness of both myself and my syce. He had not thought of tightening the girths since he had first got the mare ready, or he had loosened the girths while we were waiting dismounted, and forgotten to tighten them again. Anyhow, they had become very slack. I had not thought of looking at them. There had been a long wait for a suitable pig to break for our party, and when at last we started to ride I found myself slipping round to the off side of my horse. I could not understand what was happening at first, and why I could not sit up, but very soon became aware that my saddle was turning round. It was then too late to save myself, pull up, or right the saddle ; round it went and over I fell while going at pretty well top speed, landing on my head and getting a rather severe fall, the mare going off with the saddle hanging under her.

The second ties were drawn after dinner that evening, and run off the next morning, and the final, as far as I remember, in the afternoon. The Rāna of Dholepur won the Cup on Red Prince. I forget who were competing with him in the final, but there was one of his own following in it. They had an advantage over the "sahibs" in this sort of game, with their light weight, plenty of practice after pig in their own State, and any amount of money with which to buy the very best horses. One could not, however, help admiring the fine riding of the Rāna and two or three of his suite.

The dinner winding up a meeting is always a very festive function, the health of the winner and other toasts being proposed ; but I left the camp on the second day, so was not at it. Neither did I see the final run.

The best position to view the runs is on the back of an elephant in the beating line. A good many ladies viewed the events in this way. There are few "prettier" sights than to see a party after a boar from a good position whence the eye can follow the run from start to finish. You see a black object—the pig—bobbing along through the grass, and the party of four or five horsemen racing after it, at first perhaps some hundreds of yards behind, then gradually gaining until the foremost overhauls the boar and makes his rush to spear. The pig will jink and let in another rider, and jink again, till "first spear" is obtained, the turns and twists of the chase and the efforts of the competing horsemen as each tries to spear forming an exhilarating and gallant sight of the greatest interest. Then comes the fight and death of the boar, which, however cannot be properly viewed from a distance.

Next year, the beginning of 1884, I was at Meerut and joined the Tent Club there—the “Kādir.”* K——, a horse gunner, was honorary secretary—a real good man. I had five horses then for pig-sticking. A bay Arab, Crusader, bay Arab, Lord of the Harem, chesnut Arab, Goldwing, and the mares Impatience and Bluebell. The Arabs were between 14.3 and 15 hands. Impatience 15 hands, and Bluebell 15.1½.

Lord of the Harem was a handsome but rather noisy horse, of whose presence the field was generally aware. I had just bought him from an officer of the 10th Hussars at Lucknow, where I went to look at some horses, and he was a made charger.

Crusader and Goldwing were exceptionally handsome Arabs of good blood. I had lately bought them from Abdul Rāhmān’s stable in Bombay.

The first time I went out with the Kādir Tent Club was for a three days’ meet at the village of Gurmekhtesar on the Ganges, twenty-five miles from Meerut. The month was February and the weather perfect. We used to start after breakfast and be out all day in the cold weather pigsticking with the Kādir, taking tiffin, drinks, &c., on the elephants, and getting back in time to tub and change for dinner. Tiffin is always a jolly meal under the circumstances, sitting amongst the grass tussocks or against the bank of a nullah, gathered round a spread of cold meats and vegetables, cake, bread, butter, cheese, and jam, washed down with pegs and bottled beer, and followed by the soothing smoke; but beware of an incautious indulgence in these allurements, or your prowess in the afternoon will not equal that of the morning.

The programme on this occasion was pigsticking the first and third days, and shooting the second day. About half a dozen of us sat down to dinner in camp the evening previous to the first day—officers of the R.H.A. batteries at Meerut, and a hard-riding sapper. Some of the 8th Hussars joined us the following day.

My first day with the Kādir Tent Club was a notable one for me, as I won my first “first spear.” I had been unlucky in not getting one before. My party had a long run after a good boar. I was riding Goldwing, whom I found to be a first-rate horse over the rough grass-covered Kādir country. Several had made their efforts to spear, the pig in each case jinking and escaping the steel, when a turn in

* “Kādir” means extensive dry river-bed. As at Cawnpore, the hunting was chiefly in and along the wide bed of the Ganges.

the chase let me in. Goldwing responded well, brought me up to the boar with a rush, and I gained my first spear and the tushes. I was very happy. The boar gave us a good deal of work after my first spear to kill him, taking many more spears and nearly giving us the slip in the high grass. Later in the day I was riding Crusader, and, following a pig through some high thick jow and very rough ground, lost a stirrup. Crusader "pecked" badly, the stems twisted my foot round, and losing both my grip and balance I fell (without my horse coming down) with my right side on the shaft of my spear and hurt a rib. I do not think it was broken, though it pained considerably for some days afterwards, putting me out of the rest of that meeting; and I felt it for more than a month.

We had many a good day's sport that year. I went out pretty regularly, generally once a fortnight, till the rains became too bad in July. I took some more first spears. One day I got three. The boar which gave me my second "first spear" of that day, was lost for a time after I had speared him, though I had ranged alongside and put in a fairly good spear behind the shoulder. A first spear (especially in Cup meetings) is often only a "prick in the stern" obtained by reaching over the horse's neck with spear held out at too great a length for any strength. We used the "long" spear (eight to nine feet) underhand with the Kādir Tent Club. With the Cawnpore Tent Club the custom was to use the "short" spear (six to seven feet), with a weighted butt, overhand. However, we found my pig again, and hustled him till he stood to fight. Then not one of the horses would go up to him. There were four of us as far as I remember, and K—— was one of the party. I was riding Impatience, and could not get her up to the pig, so there we all stood round kicking our horses' sides. I then luckily spied Bluebell at a little distance, led by a syce. I galloped off and got on to her. On returning to the scene of action, I put her at the boar, who was still standing defiantly, with no one able to get his horse within spearing distance. Bluebell answered gallantly and took me close past the front of the boar, who was standing about half left face towards me. My spear caught him on the shoulder and turned him on to his side. I passed on, hearing somebody say, "Now then, at him," and before the boar could recover himself someone got his horse up and speared again. We then soon killed him. In order to put a powerful spear in I had ridden at the boar with it pressed between my arm and side, like a lancer at a low engage.

Later on, still riding Bluebell, I took my third "first spear" of that

day, but she came down soon after while I was close on the pig, with K—— on one side of me and the Major of K——'s battery on the other. The mare rolled over me. I noticed K—— kindly check his horse a little, and call out to know if I was hurt. I shouted back to him, "All right, go on, or the pig will get away," as I was very anxious to kill the boar, having got the first spear. I had kept hold of the reins, and was quickly up on Bluebell again and in at the death. To keep hold of both spear and reins in a fall is a sound pigsticking rule. Many serious accidents—some fatal to man or horse—have occurred through meeting, or falling on, the point of a dropped spear.

Bluebell was a very fast mare. Several first spears I got on her were chiefly owing to her speed. The last day of that year we were out pigsticking was in July, when the ground was sodden with rain and pools of water collected in the hollows, making the Kādir country more difficult than usual. I remember getting off after a pig that day which had rather a long start. R——, a well-known pigsticker, who had come in from another station, was some way ahead of me on a bay Arab—a good horse—at the start, which was a straggling one. The first spear lay between him and me, the rest of the party being too far behind. I easily passed him on Bluebell, and getting on to the pig gave it a good spear which turned it over. R—— coming up we then killed it. Bluebell was absolutely staunch to pig whether running or fighting. She was also a fine fencer, and I never knew her refuse. I several times took her by herself over the chase course at Meerut, which was fairly stiff in those days, and made fences are more likely (in cold blood) to cause a horse to refuse than natural ones. Most unluckily she sprained a back tendon, which left a permanent thickening and much reduced her value.

Some horses, staunch at first, become shy of a fighting pig after being engaged a few times or receiving a cut. Goldwing, for instance, would not after his first experience go up to a fighting pig, though he had never been cut. Not only that, but he would sometimes not go close up to a running pig. In this way he lost me a first spear in the Kādir Cup Meeting of the year. Though excellent after pig when first entered to the game, he gradually grew unreliable and timid.

I only had one horse cut during this season, and that was Crusader, but it made no difference to his staunchness. He was a first-rate horse—almost perfect. He and Impatience and Bluebell were the best horses I ever had. He was always quite staunch, an excellent charger in every way, and a good fencer who never refused. In fact, a high-couraged Arab, than which no better stamp of horse exists.

His cut was a severe one. In riding the pig it had got over to my near side, and I had slightly forged ahead, Crusader at the same time pulling a little. The pig then charged at me from my left rear and cut Crusader badly over the stifle, nearly throwing him down, but he recovered himself. The wound laid him up for more than a month. The pig as far as I remember was not killed. It was easy to lose a pig in the extensive grass covers of the Kādir. I, of course, stopped to attend to Crusader.

The Kādir Cup Meeting of this year was held towards the end of March, and the Ganges Cup in April. I entered Lord of the Harem and Goldwing for the former, and Impatience and Bluebell for the latter.

The Kādir Cup Meeting was not run in the lavish style of the Ganges Cup, but it was a very jolly meeting and still holds its own, whereas the Ganges Cup lapsed after 1886, I think.

I was unsuccessful in getting a first spear in either meeting, though I should certainly have taken the spears in both my first heats in the Kādir Meeting but for bad luck. In the first of them my party was sent after a small fast boar. I was riding Lord of the Harem, and in half a mile or less got on to the pig a good way ahead of anybody else, and, after a few jinks, speared, as I imagined, sufficiently to show blood. So I rode to the umpire according to custom to claim first spear and show blood on it. But there was no blood, only some grease, and the next man who speared and showed blood was adjudged the winner. This was strictly according to rule, which states that blood must be shown. The fact was that I had speared exactly on the backbone, which stopped the point penetrating further and left no blood on it. The point was blunted and turned by the impact. In the second of my heats on Goldwing I again got first on to the pig. B—— P——, of South African fame, then in the 13th Hussars, was one of the party. He was lying close behind me. I would certainly have speared over and over again but that Goldwing developed his aversion to taking me within reach of the pig. I had had slight indications of this on his part before, but nothing so pronounced as this time. While trying hard to force him up to the pig a big tussock of grass brought him down and my chance was over. B—— P got the spear. K—— won the cup. A very popular win. The meeting wound up with a good day's general pigsticking in which several heavy boars were killed.

In my runs for the Ganges Cup on Impatience and Bluebell I had no luck either. In the often high, thick grass and jow of the bed of

the Ganges it is "anyone's pig," one man after another getting his chance to spear, but the pig jinking—occasionally being temporarily lost—until someone gets on terms at the time when the pig is tired, and spears. I forget who won the cup.

In 1885 I was appointed to the then new 16th Bengal Cavalry about to be raised by Colonel George Ross. The British officers assembled at Umballa in October, and, apart from them, the strength of the regiment was then one man! A nucleus of about 150 men and horses from other regiments soon came in, and we rapidly raised the remainder, bringing the regiment to nearly full strength in men and horses by February or March of the next year, when we were moved to Jullunder, there to build new lines for ourselves.

In April I entered two Arab horses I had lately bought in the Bombay stables—a chesnut, Sultan, and a bay, Advance—for the Ganges and Muttra Cups. The Muttra Cup came off first, and I took myself and my horses there, arriving in camp on the evening previous to the first day. This cup was presented by the officers of the 3rd Dragoon Guards, then stationed at Muttra. The Rāna of Dholepur and his following were in for this meeting.

We had the usual lotteries, &c., after dinner, and started early the next morning to run off the ties. There were plenty of pig in those days around Muttra, and officers stationed there used to have great sport.

The country we went over on this day was easier than the Kādir of the Ganges. I rode Sultan in my first heat. Sirdar Indar Singh of Dholepur was one of the party. We were sent after a small boar. I got on to the pig and, making an unsuccessful effort to spear, forged rather ahead of it. The pig turned in towards me and charged from my right rear. At Muttra we had to use the short spear overhand, and I should easily have received the boar on my point, but in some way missed, and the pig came in right under my horse, who was fortunately not cut, though thrown out of his stride and nearly off his balance. Indar Singh then got on terms and speared.

In my second heat I rode Advance. Indar Singh was again in my party. He and I were riding for the spear. Advance, a young and impetuous horse, really only half broken, was pulling double, and, getting rather out of hand, carried me in front of Indar Singh, who, coming along full speed, collided with me. Advance was thrown clean off his legs and came down with great violence, rolling over and over me. I felt as if I was crushed, and wonder a lot of bones were not broken. None were, however, but I was completely knocked out

of time. Those who saw the fall said they thought I was killed. As I was too sick and giddy to stand I was ultimately carried home on a "charpoy" (native bedstead). A curious result of the fall was that both my spurs and the heel of one of my boots were torn right off. Indar Singh had come down also in the collision but was not hurt. My fall was of course far the more violent, he having ridden into me, his horse's front or half front catching my horse's flank. Captain Roche, of the 3rd Dragoon Guards, very kindly put me up and looked after me. For a day or two I was so sore and bruised all over that I could hardly move or turn in my bed, but in about a week I was able to travel, and left for my station. A severe sprain of the left ankle, however, necessitated the use of a crutch for more than two months, so I was not able to ride in the Ganges Cup Meeting. The Rāna won the Muttra Cup.

While stationed at Jullunder some of us used to go out occasionally to Kapoorthalla, a Native State close by, for pigsticking. W——, the Raja's tutor, used to run these meets. I only went out once. W—— was not present that time. There were about half a dozen of us, all brother officers as well as I remember. We drove out some twenty-five miles in the State "shandridan," drawn by six mules driven postilion, and put up in a bungalow. Next morning we set to work and had several runs, but only killed one pig. The ground was chiefly river-bed with high grass. I had two Arab polo ponies out—Bo'sun and Rājāh. I do not remember much about the runs, except that Bo'sun showed himself an absolute cur at the game, as nothing would induce him to go near a pig, even when running. The other (Rājāh) showed himself a good and staunch pony. Neither of them had been pigsticked before so far as I know.

I nearly brought Rājāh down. H—— and I were riding a pig, H—— (on my right) tried to spear, the pig turned to the left passing across his front, and then across mine, just within reach. As the boar passed I leaned forward as far as I could and speared him, and the spear was brought across Rājāh's knees, nearly bringing the pony down. The pig was lost in the thick grass. This was an altogether wrong way of attempting to spear. I should have turned to the left with the pig and got on to him properly.

The right way to spear is to lie within a horse's length of the boar's left rear, and, judging the right moment, make a rush up alongside him and spear strongly behind the shoulder underhand, or down between the shoulders overhand, taking care at the same time to hold off the pig from turning in under or across your horse as he feels the

spear, and to be ready to incline your horse to the left if necessary. Another method is to ride alongside the pig, but slightly in advance and a little out of spearing distance, which often induces him to turn in and charge you, when you should be able to spear. All this is of course difficult to do in high or thick grass, and a good deal of luck then comes in as to whether or not your horse is knocked over or cut by a heavy fighting boar; especially that kind I have sometimes seen that will not run, but walks or stands about in thick grass or other cover, ready to make it unpleasant for anyone coming near him. If in addition the ground is broken and difficult, there is not free play for the rider to manœuvre his horse in such grass or to see the pig properly.

Keeping the pig off your horse is more easily done with the underhand than the overhand spear, since with the latter you have to get closer and more over the pig to spear.

If meeting a charging pig, do so at a gallop with a strongly held spear, and turn off your horse half left as you spear. If going at a pig standing to fight, go at a gallop, and, having speared, pass on and get clear of him quickly. Then turn to repeat the operation. Never, if possible to avoid it, engage a fighting pig at a walk or trot, stand over him, or receive his charge halted. If you do your horse will probably be cut or worse.

When the boar is evidently becoming weak and exhausted, you can take greater liberties, and having given him a good spear, endeavour to hold him on to it till the other riders also again spear, when he will soon be killed. To give a good spear, the point and edge should be sharp. Spears are sometimes allowed to become rather blunt, and it is then almost impossible to drive them through a boar's tough hide, which is about an inch thick over the neck and shoulders.

"His brawny sides with hairy bristles armed
Are better proof than thy spear point can enter."

That evening we returned to Jullunder. I drove H—— back in my tandem, consisting of my two Arab chargers, that I often used so to drive, being a capital and interesting way of exercising them. It was a dark night, the road not first-rate, often with ditches on each side, narrow culverts to cross, and many bullock carts on the way. I do not think my companion felt quite sure of what was going to happen at times, but I effected a good and lucky piece of driving, and we arrived safely home for a late dinner at the mess.

I was mostly stationed in the Punjāb, where, though there are

plenty of pig along the rivers, the grass is generally too high and extensive, and the ground covered by it too bad to be rideable. I have several times tried, either alone or with others, along some of these rivers, but our efforts were always abortive for the above reasons.

When at Umballa in 1900, however, I got a run over quite easy ground (open fields). A shikāri named Bir Singh came to me one day in February, saying he knew where a very big boar had taken up his quarters, near Rājpoora, about eighteen miles off, and the ground rideable. So I agreed to try for him on the following Sunday, that being the first opportunity I should have. Bir Singh said he would put some men on to watch the pig's movements. On the Saturday I sent my horses by train with my tents, &c., under charge of my orderly, Jaggat Singh, and arrived myself by the evening train. I found my camp pitched close to the railway station, and after dinner I turned in. It rained till midnight and blew a strong wind. Waking up in the small hours I found my tent nearly down on me, most of the pegs on one side having come out of the ground. I was up early and ready to start, but was obliged to wait till some of Bir Singh's men arrived to show the way. I was riding one of my chargers, a bay Arab, Amir, a handy horse with a very nice mouth. I do not know if he had ever been pigsticked before. I bought him from an officer in the Central India Horse. We went along the Patiala railway on its west side for perhaps a mile and a half, when we reached a village about a quarter of a mile from the railway. Here Bir Singh met us and told me that the big boar had changed his quarters the day before, having been alarmed by some firing in the neighbourhood, but that there were two or three good boars in the crops close to the village. I was disappointed about the big boar, especially as the men set by Bir Singh to watch him had no idea where he had gone. However, I beat for the pig said to be close by, and we turned out a sounder of a sow with some squeakers, and a few small boars, besides two fair sized looking boats. One of the latter crossed the railway, going through the wire fencing. The other kept on our side of the line. I did not think him much of a boar, but decided to ride him. He gave me a very good run over fields for quite a mile before I managed to spear him. I caught him up in perhaps half a mile, but he jinked a good deal, often doing so across my horse to the left, and the ground being rather heavy and greasy from the night's rain, and trees, cattle, and other things getting occasionally in the way, I was not able to obtain a good opportunity for an effective spear for some time. But

when I had run him a full mile I saw we were nearing a thick-looking bit of thorn jungle, so it became necessary to spear quickly. Making my effort I got up close to his left rear, and then, judging the right moment, made my rush and gave him a good spear behind the shoulder. He then entered the thorny jungle. I had some difficulty in keeping on him in this, though, sick with his wound, he was only dodging about at a trot. Suddenly he charged my orderly, who received him with a good spear. The boar then took up his position under a bush. It was difficult to get at him on account of the thickness of the thorny cover. I got my horse up near where he was, and he charged me. It was a case of being obliged to receive the pig's charge halted. I speared him through the neck and held him off. He got off my spear and retired to his bush. I saw he was pretty well done, and, as I could not ride up to where he was on account of the overhanging thorns, I dismounted and, accompanied by Jaggat Singh, finished him on foot. A 29in. boar. Amir had behaved like a perfect pigsticker throughout.

Afterwards we worked on to see if we could find the big boar anywhere about. We beat over several miles of country, making a round back to Rājpoora, without coming across any signs of him, only seeing a sow and some squeakers. I returned to Umballa by the evening train and found my wife at the station to meet me, so I was able to run the run and kill the boar over again with her during our drive home.

The best pigsticking I ever had was certainly at Meerut. They are pleasant days to look back upon. It is a sport that draws men together and develops good comradeship perhaps more than any other. Let those who have enjoyed it and felt its charm not forget—as a verse of an old song says—

Midst festive times in other climes
To think of days so dear,
And fill a cup and drink it up,
To saddle, spur, and spear.

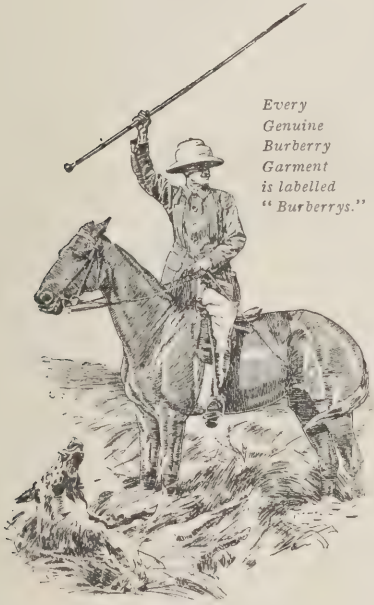


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